Odalysium

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Odalysium

by drinkbloodlikewine, whiskeyandspite

Summary

Strumpet. Whore. Rube, rube, rube. Another whore. Junkies, too many to bother counting, one of which he reminds himself needs his fingers broken before he leaves again without paying. Orphan. Barkeep.

Boy.

Not one of his.

But a boy all the same.

Mason Verger runs an opium den in London. Will Graham happens to walk in.

If this sounds familiar, you may be thinking of Elysium and the Vignettes of Sex And Violence, which are both stories written by us, and not copied or forged!

Notes

The unholy union of Elysium and the Vignettes of Sex And Violence, this story won our tumblr vote for which depraved story to publish up on AO3.

You know why.

You people asked for this, and we could not love you more.

Keep in mind that if Elysium seemed too dark, and Odalisque too depraved, this lovechild will not be a story you want to go near. We upped the ante on both angles.

Will and Hannibal are from the Vignettes verse, and Mason is from the Elysium verse. Enjoy irresponsibly, children!

- Inspired by Odalisque by drinkbloodlikewine, whiskeyandspite
- Inspired by Elysium by drinkbloodlikewine, whiskeyandspite

Inevitable Consequences

It had been his youth, Will knows, that had gotten him in in the first place.

A boy is rarely in possession of money enough to frequent such an establishment, there are other means by which he has to pay his way. And the pretty ones always have it easy, a coy look, a smile, a gentle biting of a lip and drinks are suddenly free, the pipes offered up by kneeling men just waiting for him to accept.

Sometimes older women, too, wanting a pretty little thing to recline beside them to pretend he's theirs.

For a month, Will has sustained his habit without paying even a dime, and night after night he keeps his eyes to the ceiling as he lays sprawled, listening to the creaking of the floorboards, waiting for the owner to come down and drag him outside himself.

It had happened in the Chinese den on the docks, where the woman had bodily tossed Will to the sidewalk, barely clothed and into snow. It had happened in lectures when he had come in too high, too placid and soft and pliant to learn.

And it would happen here.

The anticipation for the inevitability drove Will to pleasant shivering before his eyes rolled back and he allowed the smoke to engulf him for another night.

Tonight, he rests curled already, head in the lap of a man with too much money and too little sense, enduring the patronizing stroking of his hair as he does things with his tongue against that pipe that sends the man's interest into stark relief against the back of Will's neck where he lies.

Above them, the floorboards creak, and Will's eyes flick up at attention, following the path of the invisible man as he nears the corner of the ceiling where the landing should be.

Then the stairs creak, one by one, a soft sound of an old house, and Will fights a smile.

A step at a time, each assured beyond the swimming sensation pressing thick behind his eyes - an unintentionally dramatic entrance, but Mason, head cocked, is just as pleased to enjoy the stride of it. He sighs, curtly, at the bottom of the stairs and tugs the white smoking jacket tighter around himself, folding his arms over it. Lips purse, eyes narrow, as he surveys the spread for the evening.

Strumpet. Whore. Rube, rube, rube. Another whore. Junkies, too many to bother counting, one of which he reminds himself needs his fingers broken before he leaves again without paying. Orphan. Barkeep.

Boy.

Not one of his.

But a boy all the same.

Too old, really, to be one of his - a student, still in his coat and starched collar, black tie, no shoes, though, Mason notes with interest. Probably brought his bookbag with him and everything.

Spoiled little rich boy.

Mason's smile widens and he turns away, humming off-key as he passes through, past lamps and limbs, all splayed and warm around him, smoke parting as a sea when he waves a hand through it. The elegant motion curls into a fist that comes down firmly against the bar as he leans across it, pleased, "Wine. I'm out in the office."

The bottle presents itself without further question, the barkeep leaning back against the shelves behind himself to make a note of the bottle in his notebook - perhaps more thefts than usual lately.

Not that Will cares. He’s watching the stark whiteness that is the proprietor lean over the bar to collect what he wants.

He’s younger than Will expected, though older than himself. Something about the way he carries himself suggests privilege and an upbringing that taught him he was entitled to it always. There is also power, an immeasurable amount of power that sends Will squirming in the lap he’s in, drawing a pleased groan from the man above him.

Will arches his neck, head back and lips drawing up into a grin around the pipe he isn’t actually smoking, but instead utterly molesting.

He blinks, languid and slow, and parts his lips on a sigh when the man slips a hand down Will’s chest in a deliberate line. He spreads his legs without hesitation, turning his head to nuzzle into the man’s thigh with a purring little groan as his hand reaches between his legs and cups there.

His eyes he keeps entirely open, on the man at the bar, before bringing the pipe between his teeth again and enveloping it with his lips in a deliberate motion.

Mason glances towards the glass offered to him, turns a dry look towards the barkeep, and pivots his attention back to Will.

A little old, but with a mouth like a choir boy.

"Please," he grimaces, pushing away from the bar. "I don't know where your fingers have been."

He takes a pull from the bottle, grateful as ever for the personal store he keeps away from the ones cut with soured cider. Winding his way through the couches, glasses glinting in the gaslights, he makes no secret of his approach, and drapes himself to sit along the back of the couch.

The man on whom Will rests tenses sharply, familiar enough with the proprietor's propensity for explosions, and his hand slowly moves back along the line it followed, across Will's chest, and off of him.

"Now, now," Mason sighs, "no need to stop on *my* account. I want *everyone* to have a really wonderful time here. Are you? Are you having a really wonderful time?"

He claps a hand onto the man's shoulder and takes a long pull of wine, delighting inwardly as the man forces a laugh.

"Alwa-"

"I'm so glad. Truly, but tell me, how is the wife?" Giving the man's shoulder a squeeze that lasts just a little too long, he finally releases him to work gloved fingers up through his own hair instead, wild and nearly white in the low lights. Beneath him, the man's eyes close on a stifled sigh. "And the children. You have how many now?"

"Three," comes the low murmur, his former interest in Will fading where moments before it was pressed against his cheek.

Mason's smile widens, easy pleasure, and grateful as ever for the little brats that are always so happy to keep an eye on the more privileged customers that are drawn with clockwork regularity to the den. It's not hard to pick them out, their habits the same as any of the others, but their clothes and carriage betray them. Once they've found a place to chase their dragon, it's merely a matter of sending an escort - unseen, of course, and unwanted - behind them.

The only way to make a living easier than peddling the pipe - blackmail.

"Three," repeats Mason, and as the man starts to rise, so too does Mason, genial and bright. "Off so soon? Have to put the little darlings to bed, I know how that is. I'll see you again tomorrow, I'm sure."

The man, suddenly far less in his cups than he was moments before, doesn't spare a glance towards Will, splayed unceremoniously behind him, before quickly snatching up his coat to go.

Following his exit, Mason hands the bottle towards Will without turning towards him until he resumes his perch along the back of the couch, a languid swivel to regard him. "And you," he declares, more statement than question.

Will hums, fingers splayed to hold the bottle before he tips it to drink, lips slow to slip from the lip of the bottle when he’s done.

“I was rather enjoying myself, before you made him leave,” he admits, smile wide and pleased before he hands the bottle back, doesn’t bother sitting up as he brings the pipe to his mouth again. It doesn’t take much to lean over and heat it again, breathing in the heady fumes and arching his back before sighing them out.

“He’ll miss his money,” he laments, arching higher still to look towards the door the man had left through, upside down. “Plying me with wine, encouraging the pipe… and now he can’t even enjoy my mouth.”

A frown, almost genuine, before Will’s eyes slip to Mason’s again and he tilts his head.

Icy blue eyes level on Will, pupils wide enough to nearly block out the pale shade. He follows the lines of the boy, clad in pristine black but for the high-collared shirt beneath it, against which Will spreads his fingers in a seemingly absent gesture, and then blinks wide with a loud laugh.

"Right," he exclaims, snaring back the wine for another long sip. "Now, this is the part where I make some little remark - something about not letting good money go to waste, right?"

He offers the bottle back, and holds it just far enough away that Will has to stretch for it.

"Or - wait, even better. I'll say something about how I'm certain I could find a better use for your mouth than him, and you'll laugh, and pretend I'm very funny."

Pushing his fingers into Will's hair, they tighten just a little, grin spreading his lips. "I am very funny, aren't I?"

Will's brows raise, smile still one of genuine delight as he flicks his eyes between Mason’s.

"Hilarious,” he agrees, directing the pipe to between his lips again and making a sound of faint displeasure when it's taken away. It is replaced with the bottle, however, and Will finds himself smiling before obediently sucking the top into his mouth and swallowing when it's tilted.

Oddly gentle.

Will is certain that won’t last much longer.

He licks his lips when they're free again, sits up enough to tilt his head into the hand grasping it.

"I was going to recite old Greek poetry, actually,” he reveals, amused at the gentle niggle of surprise at his earnestness. “Usually gets him right up."

A press of lips together, red from wine, from youth.

"I shudder to think what you had in mind that I would be doing with it."

The leather glove is cool against Will's cheek where Mason cups it, sliding his thumb along his cheekbone, and down further still to press across his lips. He leans forward a little, watching Will over the top of his glasses, eyes darting from feature to feature, no forest for the trees but satisfied enough it seems, with the way Will's lips wrap just softly around his finger.

A choir boy in looks alone, although maybe in practice, too, all priests considered.

"There will be plenty of room for Greek," Mason assures him with a pat on the cheek. He slides limber from the back of the couch, arms heavy and liquid from the opium still thickened like tar in his limbs. He holds the bottle out only as a taunt, to bid Will follow him, before making his way towards the stairs.

Arms folded over himself, coat pulled tight, he turns to ascend them backwards, eyes bright as embers in their focus.

"What is your name? I do like to know who's joining me for a private drink, you know - it's not every day I share company in this way, share my wine, my little pleasures."

Not every day, but nearly so, and depending on how long they last, sometimes more than once a day. He sighs, fond, and turns to tug himself up the rest of the stairs.

Will spares only a brief look to the couch he had occupied, bending to take his shoes before obediently following like a pup after a new master. He keeps a few stairs below him the entire way, eyes wide when they're met, smile languid when Mason turns away.

"Will," he offers, tone curling on the liquid at the end, turning it on his tongue into something gently more youthful. He feels his cheeks flush in anticipation as slowly, slowly, the wedge of light disappears at his side, as he ascends the stairs to the room above. He bites his lip.

"Do I get yours too, or do I just call you 'mister'?" He adds a lisp to the word enough to actually be comical and smiles genuinely when Mason turns to him again, on the landing now, Will three steps below.

Mason braces both hands against the railing, leaning precariously across the stairs to loom over Will, crooked grin cutting wide. Far from minding the gentle mockery, he revels in it, loves that this new boy can look at everything around him and see Mason's tastes so clearly dug into the walls, soaked into the floorboards.

His teeth press together, savage delight and a low snarl.

"Say that again."

Will widens his eyes a little, lower lip pressed between his teeth, and he takes a step closer.

"You want me to call you 'mister'?" he repeats again, dragging out the word, with the same lisp flattening the sibilant and the same shiver peeling across Mason's skin when he does.

"Mason." Each syllable is stressed equally, like teaching the name to someone who doesn't speak English.

Like teaching it to a child.

"Mason," Will repeats, chin lifting, and Mason's fingers close quickly around it. He resists the urge to dig his nails in yet to those rosy cheeks, to leave scarlet stripes along them, and merely holds him, to watch the shape of his mouth.

"Good boy," sighs Mason. "Very good boy." He pats Will's cheek before he turns to push open the door to his office, handing the wine back to him. Sifting towards the desk, he rummages across it through paperwork and books - most of which ends up across the floor - and finally finds the small snuffbox to gather into his palm.

"Mummy and daddy have no idea what you're up to, do they? What are you here for - university? Boarding school?" Christ, Mason hopes for boarding school. "What do you tell them when they ask what you're studying? What are you so busy with, dear boy, that you can't even take time to write?"

Will sets his shoes quietly by the door, peels off his jacket to toss on top, hands slipping into his pockets as he meanders over, eyes skimming the room. Large as the space downstairs, one window that looks painted shut, a table in the middle of the floor, neither here nor there in room design, a tall wardrobe with the doors partially open, and the crowning piece: an enormous bed in the corner, messy sheets, four posts.

Will makes a pleased little purring noise again.

“Mummy and daddy think I’m in my dorm room, getting a good night’s sleep between classes,” he says, a pleasant, simple lie. “Six days a week in lessons, and Church on Sunday for morning mass and evening mass.”

He stops, close to Mason again but not enough to yet reach. The other just regards him with that same strangely restrained hunger before twitching his head in a shake and furrowing his brows.

“How old are you, Will?”

Lip between teeth again and a slow drag to free it before Will responds.

“Fourteen.”

A slow blink, a deliberate breath as Mason’s fingers flex against whatever he’s holding. Will doesn’t blink, just watches him, smiling without moving a single muscle in his face.

“Are you lying to me, Will?” Mason asks, almost sweet, disturbingly so. Will blinks then, adjusts his stance to look *up* at Mason, through messy curls.

“Do you care?”

Mason draws himself up a little taller, a shift of shoulders, a roll of his head to stretch his neck as he steps closer. Serpentine, liquid movements, a venomous ichor in the way he extends a hand to brush the backs of gloved fingers down Will’s cheek. His fingertips press beneath his chin and lift their eyes to meet.

“I always care,” he drawls, “if something’s gone off with age.” Mason grips Will’s chin and turns him from side to side, as though expecting an animal at market, and - seemingly pleased with what he finds - he smiles benevolently. “But you - you’re still fresh as spring daisies, aren’t you?”

There’s a wryness to his tone, a lie that even he doesn’t believe with Will’s pretty mouth distracting him like that. He cups the boy’s cheek when he takes another drink of wine, to feel his jaw work, and then opens the snuff-box.

Will blinks at the dusty, medicinal smell in the air, glancing between the wild-haired man in front of him and the box of powder he presents.

“But what I cannot abide is *lying*, Will,” Mason sighs, lifting out a tiny spoonful of the powder. “You should know that about me. As long as you’re honest, about whatever it is - Mason, be gentle, Mason, it hurts, Mason, I’m bleeding - we won’t have a problem. But you have to *trust* me,” he intones, stepping closer still, and offering out the little serving of cocaine.

Pure. Strong. A vicious burn at the edges of it as Will looks from it to Mason, and back again.

“Call it a truth serum,” Mason laughs.

Again Will considers, rolls his bottom lip between his teeth before ducking his head with a laugh.

"I'm seventeen,” he admits, glancing up, swallowing gently, "and... they kicked me out of school for truancy. Last week."

A bright smile before he steps closer. He can almost smell the power behind that powder, even amidst the smoke in his head that wafts and turns as he does, trying to unbalance him.

"The strap didn’t work on me," he sighs. "I liked it too much."

Another lick of his lips, a brief hesitation, and Will leans in to breathe stuff in.

It's sharp, stinging, and his eyes tear almost immediately.

"Oh hell," he sighs, one hand up to wipe the powder still stuck to the rim of his nostril, the other out to catch Mason’s arm for balance, something the man finds utterly delightful. The box closes with a snap, disappears into Mason's pocket. Will makes a helpless little noise that turns into a laugh as his limbs tremble with the sensation of this new thing in his system.

"What will this cost me?" he asks, breathless, nearly stumbling closer, still holding onto Mason's arm. "Nothing in your house is free, Mason, and,"

His breathing hitches gently, eyes up to meet Mason's through the glass, wide and dark, bare rims of blue. He shakes his head with a giggle.

"I have no money!"

Mason sways a little closer, a viper coiling towards a small helpless thing.

"Bad form," he clucks, voice a little lower. "Partaking with no way to pay it. Surely you didn't intend to swindle me tonight the way you did what's-his-name down there."

He purses his lips in thought and tugs off a glove, one finger at a time, and then reaches. His thumb drags along Will's upper lip, feels the smoothness of it, and he wipes away the traces of dust with a glimmering smile.

"Doesn't matter," Mason decides, before the wild-eyed boy before him can answer. "Everyone earns their keep around here - you'll find I'm really very generous with how much I can give." Equally unsettled eyes level on Will and Mason bares his teeth, rubbing the dust from Will's lip across his gums, chasing it with his tongue.

Very close now, noses nearly touching, Mason's eyes wide, voice punctuating the quiet. "Shame about the truancies - not such a good boy after all. But I've always had a soft spot for helpless little creatures, did you know that? Those wretched things you find starving in the street." He presses his bare fingers against Will's cheek, pushing up into his hair. "I like to take them in. Feed them. Let them lay by the fire. They look at you with such gratitude. It's really very beautiful."

Mason's fingers snarl, twisting deeper through Will's long curls, just until he gasps.

"It's just unfortunate that - for as much as I give them - they don't live longer. Struggles take their toll, I suppose," sighs Mason, bringing their mouths nearly together. "But that just means I'm in the market for a new pet."

Will grins, can feel Mason's breath against his lips and smiles wider for it.

He feels as though he could do anything, as though he could run forever if he started, could climb any mountain, fight anyone who touched him. He feels invincible, immortal -

"Do I get a pretty collar?" he asks, biting his lip and blinking to try and get Mason in focus with how close the man holds them. "Do I get to have a tail to wag? To crawl on the floor for you?"

A soft sound, like a moan, as the hand in his hair twists tighter. He imagines having to eat only what he's fed by hand, imagines a tether, imagines a pendulum swinging, with every stroke the bed is remade, the light crawls shaking and backwards to its morning position. Will wonders if he's seeing the past, the future, or if it matters.

He will know the feeling of those sheets against his skin, he is certain.

"Can I sleep at the foot of your bed?" he whispers.

The enormous grin cracks wider still.

"Oh, you'll crawl," Mason promises, the clarity in his voice far more dangerous than the fervor. He releases Will's hair to bring his hand lower, across Will's mouth, and slide to rest on his neck.

Fingernails dig sharp above his collar and with a shove and a laugh, Mason brings Will roughly to his knees.

"Good dogs stay on the floor," he grins, teeth clenched and bared and as starkly white as the rest of him. "*Stay*."

Fingers trembling with anticipation, he squeezes Will's throat a little tighter and moves towards the chest of drawers, shedding his smoking jacket as he goes. Well-dressed beneath the bizarre coat, far nicer than this neighborhood should merit, an expensive silvery vest over fitted trousers, suspenders up over the tailored shirt.

He glances back towards Will, yanking open a drawer, and rifling through it.

"I'm glad you're here," he declares, dropping something heavy and leather, a clatter of metal, to the floor bedside his feet. "These things are made for horses and usually the creatures I find are so -"

He stops, pulls hard on something stuck, grimaces and pulls again until it snaps loose. A swish of leather from the riding crop that he tucks under his arm, and Mason continues.

"They're so very small. Little fits them, so I have to force it, and it's all very messy. But you, you're a healthy one, aren't you? Someone took good care of you."

"I took care of me," Will breathes, but it's hardly an angry confession, hardly a displeased one. He made do. He still does. After this, he still will.

He thinks of how he had lain on his back, lips parted to gasp out his pleasure in smoke as some man or several touched his skin, worked open his pants, positioned his own pliant hand over hard bulges beneath fabric, between their legs, and all that time he stared up.

Here.

"Will you take care of me now?" he asks, words smooth, coy, as he stretches, knees slipping wider on the smooth floor, hands stretching forward until he’s nearly face to face with the floorboards, everything in stark relief.

"Teach me to be a good boy?"

He delights in knowing Mason enjoys this false youthfulness. He’s young enough but this man... this one feasts on the souls of utterly innocent creatures. Will needs to tempt, to distract the man closer in order to get what he wants.

A thrum of thunderous pleasure at the question, Mason shivers visibly, tilts his head from side to side, and dumps another piece onto the floor. A bridle, this time. Always a delight to make them hold the bit in their mouths, even though it’s so big. It pinches, sometimes, caught in the corners of their lips, but only when he pulls too hard on it.

Mason laughs.

He *always* pulls too hard on it.

“Papa used to say I have a heavy hand with the animals,” Mason muses, unclipping the reins from the bridle, and snapping the worn, oiled strap of leather between his hands. “But you

have to when they're unwieldy, otherwise they never learn who their master really is. You can't let them think for themselves or they get," he pauses for the word, licks it from his lips, and turns to Will with a grin. "Spirited."

His shoes click against the old floorboards as he winds his way closer again, crop still tucked under his arm, and he looms in front of Will, studying the bend of his back, presenting himself so prettily.

"The key," he emphasizes, "is to understand the animal itself. They're all different, even if they still break the same, but the bad habits you have to beat out of them really depend on who else has had them first."

He tugs his other glove off and sends it to the floor, crouching in front of Will. The boy's eyes are enormous, spread black with pupil, lips parted and damp and eager, and Mason tucks a finger beneath Will's chin to lift it.

"You are a pretty one, aren't you? Good breeding," he decides, looping the length of leather around Will's neck, and clipping it closed into a loop. "And now you're all mine. We're going to have such *fun* together."

The last word is punctuated by a sharp jerk to tighten the lead around Will's neck, snapping high beneath his chin to keep it raised as Mason stands. He's in a very good mood tonight, it seems, a well-struck balance between abundant chemicals, and he pushes a hand back through his hair, lips twisting into a peculiar pouting smile as he looks down at Will and laughs.

"Know any tricks?"

The initial response to hook his fingers beneath the leather and loosen it is curbed into a caress of the strap around his throat. Will swallows, feels it there as pressure, heavy, and grins.

It feels as though his heartbeat not only beats through him but the rest of the room as well, pulsing up and up and up in a steady thrum, like the beat of savage music. Will makes a murmuring sound and twists to sit properly, legs in a messy tangle at his side, one hand just able to reach the floor to hold himself balanced.

"I can do anything," he says, and he wonders if it is considered a lie when he feels the truth of it so wholly. He thinks again of running without end, of the sheets folding and refolding into neatness only to be disheveled back.

He grins, eyes up, and turns his head just enough to catch the leather in his teeth and close them around it. He doesn't tug, but the darkness in his eyes levels to a humming grey, like dusk.

"Can you," responds Mason, no question in it. He steps closer, eyes hidden behind the glitter of gaslamp, and his grin twists into a look of displeasure at his dog, biting at the lead.

“You puppies are insatiable,” he murmurs, and slowly winds the lead around the back of Will’s head, against his mouth again until his mouth parts to accept it. A gag, now, horse-stink leather rough against his lips, and Mason winds the end around his fist, fighting back the urge to snap it so hard it cuts Will’s mouth.

He’s always had a habit of breaking toys sooner than he means to.

“Clothes,” Mason instructs, jerking the lead just a little, just a bit, just enough to scratch the itch in him that already howls laughing to see skin shredded and teeth knocked out. He’s done that before. He’s done that *plenty*. He can do that again and again.

He wants this one to be different, at least until he’s bored with it. This one can actually talk in more than just pleas and crying. This one knows Greek, it says. Mason doesn’t care about Greek, but he likes nice things, and it would be nice to have a dog to come home to at the end of the night, to nuzzle his hand and whine for his attention from the floor until he pets it or beats it or both.

Probably both.

“I’m going to take good care of you,” he decides, reaching out to press his fingers through Will’s hair, down over the stripe of leather wrapped around his head. He loosens it with a quick flourish, watching with interest as it falls free of Will’s lips. “You’d like that, wouldn’t you? Someone to feed you all the things you want. Let you lay around by the fire. Teach you and play with you.”

It would almost sound tender, if not for the snarled grin with which he watches Will’s fingers rise to his collar.

“My Will.”

Will makes a soft noise and smiles, directs his energy - and there is so much of it, so close, just under his skin if he could just find a way to use it - to keeping his hands from shaking as he works the buttons on his shirt and slips it down his back. He lets it rest there, caught against his elbows, and looks up.

He looks younger, almost sleepy, the way his clothes rest. Like a small child in a nightshirt too big for it, rubbing its eyes when it comes downstairs too early on a Christmas morning.

Will bites his lip.

"Please play with me,” he purrs, the tone softer, similar to his lisp on the stairs. He knows what it does. He knows what the man wants of him, laid out in front of him like a cobbled road. Frantic, quick, harsh, over and over until he is sated or Will exhausted.

There is no tenderness to tempt here, just the devil.

But... one does choose hell for the company.

Will brings one hand between his legs to work the buttons there, to fold the fabric open to reveal the soft breeches beneath. He would need to stand to remove them entirely, but he

doubts Mason wants this done simply. Instead he just tilts his head, curious, and lets his thighs slide wider where he sits, in invitation to look, to touch, to rend from his body in harsh jerks and quick rips.

Watching with a sharpness of attention that one may not expect from someone whose moods pitch so wildly, Mason's eyes narrow with interest as Will spreads and splays and softens himself. Years erased with gestures, worries with words played sweetly from his lips, a young man, perhaps, but readily capable of becoming a child.

Of course, Mason always prefer the real thing, but they don't do anything like this - asking him for it, sprawling on display for it. Too busy struggling.

One of them scratched him, right under the eye, not two weeks earlier.

Mason was happy to teach him a Biblical lesson - an eye for an eye, or near enough, anyway.

"I had a dog once," Masons recalls, circling Will until he's standing behind him. Smooth fingers snare roughly in his shirt and yank it from his arms to be tosses to the floor. His tie follows, pulled sharply enough to nearly burn against Will's slender, pale neck.

Cool fingers press to where the red mark is left, just beneath the leather strap, and hold there against Will's throat.

"They're not as sturdy as you'd think."

Mason continues his slow circle, and wraps another loop of leather around his wrist. He lifts upward, until Will is drawn onto his knees, and with a quick snap, brings him to the ground. Will catches himself on his hands just before colliding with the floor, remaining where he's been dropped, and watching Mason with eyes, bright and blue, beneath his curls of hair.

"Good boy," Mason grins, before feigning a frown and tapping Will's nose with a finger. "*Stay*."

As Will readily guessed, Mason is quick to yank Will's trousers down from his hips, around his thighs, soft britches left in place.

"Now," he sighs, "tell me, just how many owners have you had? Such a naughty puppy to get tossed out into the street like that."

Will shivers, turns his head. The leather tighter around his throat now with every shift and pull and Will feels the discomfort that comes with swallowing with it. He considers the question, knows what answer is expected, that he wriggle and adjust, pretend to have none while the blush that comes with the lie gives him away. In truth, it hasn't been many.

"One," he admits, lip finding its way between his teeth again, pressed out of shape. "One of my professors took a liking to me. I let him."

He twists, thighs pressing together then parting again, sighs.

“The rest have merely petted a stray,” he laughs, enjoying the game of being this… thing… to someone, a toy in the hands of an overgrown boy who is dangerous in his convictions, his beliefs in who he is and how he is.

“Fed me scraps, paid for wine and poppy so they could touch.” He laughs again, that oddly sweet, helpless little noise that he supposes Mason’s laugh may once have been, before it twisted, turned off key.

“And then you offered me wine.”

“I did,” Mason agrees, cheerfully, whether pleased or not or even paying attention enough to hear Will’s answer, it’s hard to say. Reminded of it, Mason snatches the bottle of wine from his desk and takes a quick pull before offering it against Will’s lips. Still on fours, Will’s eyes settle on Mason, smile caught in the corners of them, as he drinks from the bottle that Mason upturns into his mouth.

“I’ll feed you very well.” He watches wide-eyed at the way Will’s throat works, and in this Will can sense a particular truth, an interest - at least so far - in keeping this one alive. Still, he tilts the bottle higher, more than a trickle now, a steady flow, until Will makes a sound of protest and coughs sharply, wine spilling from his mouth, from the bottle, onto the floor, scarlet cheeked.

Mason’s eyes sharpen to pinpoints, and he leans nearer Will to drag his tongue along the boy’s cheek, drinking the wine from his skin before he mutters, with a glance to the floor, “You’re going to want to lap that up before it soaks into the floorboards. That would displease the cleaners very much, they’ve only just gotten the last stains out of them.”

Skimming his palm along Will’s back, Mason presses the small of it down a little further to arch the boy, and his fingers snare in the waist of Will’s britches as he passes his touch along Will’s ass and slides them down.

A hum of approval as Mason extends a finger to trail back up the inside of Will’s pale thigh, across the seam of his balls, and up higher still - two fingers now - to pull at the little pink ring of his opening. He tugs his hole open a little, crouched beside Will, and then teases a finger inside with little more than the wine sticky on his fingers. Grinning as Will twists in discomfort, Mason pushes harder, upward, to force Will into holding his ass high in the air, bowed over his hands.

“Lick it up, Will.”

Will twists, finds that only brings more discomfort, and finally obediently leans, bends further, to touch his tongue to the wine on the floor.

He manages most before Mason hums, pleased, and twists the leather over his wrist again, tightening the pull, forcing Will to hold his breath if he wants to keep it when he licks.

And he does, with a soft whine of displeasure, a shiver as the finger pushes deeper still, until he arches higher, a deeper bend in his back by his own making, feeling the way Mason spreads his palm over one cheek and squeezes.

Will lifts himself on all fours again, head ducked, thighs shifting to spread wider before he turns to meet Mason's eyes, licking his lips clean. Expectant.

"Down, boy," Mason instructs, brow lifting.

Smooth leather strokes cool up the line of Will's spine, riding crop held jauntily aloft until it finds the base of Will's skull. A firm, but gentle push as Mason stands, legs on either side of the boy, positively beaming as he pushes Will's face to the ground.

"Stay."

Mason unwinds the leash enough that Will can stay bowed when he steps back, although the idea of holding it too tight for him to do so - to hear those lovely choking sounds - and then beating him for disobedience when he finally bends is particularly tempting.

He considers, for possibly the first time, that the longer he keeps a toy unbroken, the longer he'll have to play with it. Not usually an interest since breaking them is the most fun of all, but he'll be able to still do that, if he wants to, at any point, if he keeps this one here with him.

The stiff, chilly leather touches the inside of Will's thigh, teasing up and down for a moment, before it cracks hard against his soft skin.

"Wider," he drawls, extending the word out many syllables, and slapping Will's other thigh next. "This is what ‘down’ means, puppy. Do you think you can remember?"

The crop grazes upward, menacingly slow, to tap just softly against the back of the boy's balls, against his presented opening.

Will shivers, whines, but doesn't move beyond how his thighs tremble from the strikes - cruel and harsh against him.

He wants to move, to twist, bend, spread himself wide and get fucked into the damned floor. He wants he wants he wants...

"Yes, Mason."

He sighs, pressing his chest closer to the floor and his hands splaying over it. He is dizzy with wine, languid and restless, entirely, painfully restless. He pushes back against the crop where he feels it, a graceful bend of his body. He can feel himself already semi-hard from this, disturbingly pleased with this, enjoying the abuse that will only get worse.

Some people have a sixth sense - a preternatural awareness of when certain moments shift, when changes occur. Going towards the door before the guests have even knocked. Anticipating a storm through the soreness of one’s joints. A sense that Mason shares, when it comes to storms of his own making, and his attention hones on Will in the moment that the drugs collide in his system. The loose weight of the poppy that convinces its companion that no harm or ill can befall them. The bowstring pluck of the cocaine that vibrates alive and ringing to push one towards action. The wine as the more familiar friend that joins them, prompting one towards bravery and a loose tongue.

A heady push and pull of drives and sensations, pulling a sigh from Mason as he watches the ecstatic shivers in the boy beneath him. He thinks fondly of when he felt those things so easily, before even more became less, and drove him seeking more complex means of achieving intoxication.

Growing, really, as a person and in his interests.

“Good,” Mason intones, more to himself than Will, pulling steadily on the leash to bring the boy to face him again. Without mind for the expensive fall-front trousers he wears, he kneels in front of him, an immense presence even so lowered, and snares Will by the jaw to raise him up a little from the floor.

The kiss is languid, lazy, tongues pressed into each other’s mouths with little regard, lips sliding slick and eager together. He can feel the pulse of energy in the boy, the pleasure that in its amplified intensity pulls at him every which way - to do nothing, to do everything - and Mason watches him, eyes open, and breaks the kiss only long enough to replace his tongue with his fingers, just between their mouths, to push Will away.

“I always love how animals show their affection, when they’re smart enough to do it,” Mason suggests, grinning. “Lick my hand, boy.”

Will’s eyes are hooded, dark and bright beneath the lids, and he parts his lips with a shuddered sigh before he allows just the tip of his tongue forward, to trace fingers base to tip. He blinks, then focuses his attention on Mason entirely, a laser of blue aimed and unwavering as one lick becomes several, as the tip of his tongue becomes the wide rough flat of it.

The leash tightens and Will shudders with the sensation, swallowing a little moan before tilting his head to nuzzle the damp palm that, despite his attentions, despite the gloves before, is still cold.

"Play with me," he whines softly.

Another chill shiver catches Mason off-guard and he curls his hand to press his palm to Will’s cheek, pushing his fingers into the boy’s long, loose curls of hair to scratch with surprising gentleness against his scalp.

“Oh, I like when you beg,” Mason declares, almost quietly. His fingernails start to press a little harder, not enough to leave marks or tear hair yet, but his teeth bare clenched somewhere between a grin and a grimace. “Do it again.”

The lithe length of Will’s body twists delightfully as he presses his head into the touch - stimulation for a body that almost aches for it now - and he spreads his knees a little wider, cock nearly touching the floor, wholly hard now.

“Please,” keens Will, pitching his voice higher, younger, sweeter and watching through the slits of his eyes as Mason’s lips part in response. “Please, play with me?”

Another nuzzle, mouth warm, against Mason’s palm is enough to spur him from his reverie and he snaps the lead, hard, laughing loud when Will whimpers, startled. “Roll over,” comes

the instruction. “Beg.”

Fingers splayed against the floorboards, Will stretches his arms out in front of himself, more feline than canine, but it hardly matters, when he lifts his ass higher still into the air and spreads himself across the floor, sprawling onto his back. He leaves his arms pulled high above his head, eyes rolling closed on a groan as Mason traces the boy’s cock with the cool leather of the riding crop. It twitches, Will shivers, and Mason slips the crop beneath the boy’s swollen cock, flushed pink, lifting it from where it curves against his soft, pale belly.

“Beg,” Mason reminds him, and Will’s groan fills with pleas.

“I’ll be so good for you,” he whimpers. “Such a good boy if you’ll keep me and play with me. Please play with me, Mason.”

The pout that purses Will’s scarlet lips is enough.

The crop is slid away, tossed with a thud to the floor, and replaced by Mason’s fingers curling cold, sudden, too hard, around Will’s length. He strokes once, enough to cut Will’s moan short on a hitched breath, before taking up a quick pace, functionally fast, focused on the arch and bend of Will’s body beneath him as he sighs, “Good puppy. Will you cum for Mason? Hmm? Does puppy want that?”

"Yes.” Breathless, pliant, Will's lips left parted on more gentle whimpers as the hand does not relent, sending shivers through him, down his spine, arching it up, hips up to Mason's touch, thighs spreading for him, chest rising and falling on quick breaths.

"Puppy wants," he purrs, the sound turning into a laugh as he twists, gasps hard and quick as the leash is tightened. He opens his eyes, seeking Mason's, trembling hard now, leaking against his palm.

"Please, please, please," whimpers and gasps, voice higher, needy, childish.

Mason slows his pace, hardens it still, squeezing almost so hard it hurts, and drawing off his palm to regard the trail of slick along it. Wordless, eyes narrowed, he holds his hand out to Will to lick, smirking pleased when Will does it with a whimper.

“Good dog.”

He keeps the leash wrapped around his fist as his other hand returns to stroke Will, between their bodies as Mason slinks between Will’s legs. Quick movements jerk Will’s legs higher when Mason jams his knees beneath his thighs, laughing when Will locks his ankles around his neck.

“Pretty little puppy,” croons Mason softly, “just wants to play. You can stay and we’ll play whenever I want.”

He hisses in pleasure when Will arches higher on a long and almost anguished moan, bent nearly to his shoulders, and Mason’s hand moves against him relentlessly even still.

“Do it,” he barks suddenly. “Do it, dog!”

A gasp, high, and Will's eyes roll up and close. He makes a quiet sound, desperate and lilting, and trembles, twists, before he cums hard across his stomach and chest, across Mason's fingers.

Then he laughs.

Almost helpless, breathless giggles, lip between his teeth until he’s slapped, harsh and unexpected, Mason's hand remaining to grip Will’s face, smearing his own mess against him.

"Messy boy,” he chastises, but the grin remains wide, almost cruel in how manic it is. He holds his palm hard over Will’s mouth until he is forced to breathe through his nose. Then he shifts it higher and cuts off Will’s breath entirely.

"That is another thing I will not tolerate, Will, mess." He holds harder as Will starts to struggle, "I will punish you soundly for your messes, for your inattention to them."

Will whines, thighs squeezing harder around Mason as his lungs burn with his struggle for air.

"If I let you cum," Mason continues, matter-of-factly, as though the boy beneath him isn't near-convulsing with his need to breathe, "you will lick it clean after. Every time. I won't have a dirty boy in my room."

He holds a moment more, sick pleasure at the struggle, before letting go, watching Will draw in breath and cough before taking another.

He blinks rapidly, lips parted, sticky and messy, flushed and shaking with adrenaline, with the drug still in him, eyes nearly black with it. Then a pink tongue flicks out to lick his lips, to bite the bottom one as he grins.

"This was a gift, Will," Mason informs him, sitting back on his heels. "You understand? I can't spoil my pets by just giving them whatever they want. It wouldn't be fair to you, really. Teaches the wrong things. Sends a bad message."

Dampened hand still held daintily aloft, he watches as Will skims his fingers through the cum on his face and brings them to his own lips. A little moan, as he laps them clean, sucks his own release from them, dutifully wiping it from his chest and belly in turn.

"If I do it myself, I expect just the same. It isn't my job to clean up messes, Will. It just isn't. That's work for boys to do, not men." Mason turns his attention, feigning fretfulness, to his own hand, before offering it out to Will expectantly.

"Papa couldn't stand a mess," Mason continues, as Will leans forward, hands pressed to the floor, to trace the flat of his tongue against each of Mason's fingers. "Really, he'd become quite angry. We work too hard not to have nice things and -"

His speech is cut short with a breath in his throat, rising up onto his knees again as Will draws a finger into his mouth, eyes fluttering closed with a moan and cheeks hollowing to suck slowly. He turned such a lovely shade of red before, Mason considers, probing deeper

into the boy's mouth - he'd very much like to see it again, for longer maybe, but not too long, because then they turn purple and it's over.

And maybe this one will be smart enough not to try and use his teeth.

It's always such a damper on things when Mason has to knock them out after that happens.

Cleaned to satisfaction, he snares the lead closer again, to pull Will's face demanding towards his groin, visibly hard in his trousers.

"Be careful," Mason warns.

Will's still breathless, gasping with parted lips and wet, wide eyes, but one hand he spares, the other still down for balance, to work the pants open.

He's done this before. Filling his mouth with the sharp salt of another man's pleasure to wash away the taste of Plato or Aristotle. This he knows the intricacies of, the subtle turns and twists, how to suck and when to curl his tongue.

He brings up his hand to wipe at his eyes, a drop still hanging heavy on his lashes, looking so unbearably young that the leather tightens to utter cruelty. He whimpers, drops his hand, lifts his eyes with drawn brows and a pouting bottom lip.

"That mouth," Mason breathes, curling the leather harder until Will's neck is arched with the effort, "open."

Will obeys, eyelids fluttering.

"Wider."

He does. Mason shivers with just watching him, indulging, for once, in taking his time.

"Tongue," he whispers, harsh, and the corners of Will’s lips tilt in a grin before that, too, is obeyed.

A second just to look, to take in the temptation, before the leash is yanked hard and Will is forced closer, one hand out to catch Mason's thigh the other to the floor. He hums gently, bites his lip, and leans in to take Mason into his mouth, slowly, inch by inch.

The belt is held rigid tight between Mason's fist and the boy's throat, squeezing enough to discomfort, but not yet enough to choke. He swallows hard, mouth fallen slack to watch as his length disappears past the boy’s pretty lips, and unable to resist, he reaches to push them out of shape, and feel his cock against them, tracing the damp curve with his thumb.

Will is good, Mason will grant him that, and delights in imagining how many times Will has found himself this way - tears glittering in his long eyelashes, eyes red-rimmed and lips swollen and flushed, wrapped around an unyielding cock that Mason now presses deeper across the boy’s tongue.

Far deeper, in fact, than Mason ever usually gets to be when he does this, and he shudders ecstatically to watch Will flinch when he finally brushes the back of his throat.

“More,” Mason grins, the only sensation he ever feels anymore, really - needing and wanting and demanding *more* from the world and everyone in it.

Will hums his displeasure, hands curling a little tighter where they hold, but he manages a little more before he genuinely chokes. Above him, Mason almost moans in delight.

"Again. Do that again for me."

The grip on the leather is relentless, whitening Mason's fingers where it wraps as Will imagines it does around his throat. It isn’t hard to choke again - he doesn't have to fake that - and he moans, a weak little noise that gets silenced by a harder yank to the leather.

Then it's relentless, a brief reprieve where Will gets to gasp in a breath before Mason thrusts back in, deep as before, and much faster. Over and over until Will is genuinely struggling with it, hands curled into claws against Mason's thigh but finding him utterly immovable.

"Eyes up." Breathless, immeasurably pleased for the moment that he hadn't yet damaged his toy, that he can watch the flush of his cheeks grow darker like before as Will struggles, as his eyes turn almost liquid blue with tears.

Mason knows these colors well. Pale first, they’re always all so pale and consumptive in this awful city, and then pink as they’re touched more, or as they touch him, aroused or ashamed or both, if Mason has any say about it. That pale pink - the color of an English garden rose - darkens though as Mason presses onward, seeking that infinite *more* turning red, ruddy, finally the harsh scarlet as the rest of them pales around the crimson in their cheeks and mouths and openings, stark and stunning.

Only past that, choking or fucking or spreading or beating, does the scarlet take on the violet tint that Mason loves the most. The color of pomegranate stains on fingers, of wine on lips, brief enough before the tedious livid color of military uniforms and mice, blue and finally grey, that awful ashy shade that still - for a while, at least - bears the pretty purple shade for a little longer before that too pales again, and then white, white, white as the sickening snow that scatters and turns sooty against the ground -

Mason gasps and jerks back from Will’s throat, enough to give him room to breathe, for a moment, enough to keep him from reddening to too rough a shade of scarlet. Their eyes meet and Mason is almost tender as he runs his hand along the boy’s face, to wipe the sweat from his brow, to feel the heat of his cheeks and of his mouth.

He doesn’t want this one to turn to ash - he wants to stoke the fire and not extinguish it so suddenly. He will, of course, allow the fire to consume when he is ready to let it, but for now, no - this one will stay and sleep on his floor and lick his hand and follow his commands. A beautiful pet, with curly hair and big blue eyes.

The lead pulls just a little tighter, and Mason’s pale cheeks are flushed as he brings himself deep into Will’s mouth again.

A moan, this time of genuine pained displeasure, and Will flinches again, swallowing quickly to keep his gag reflex at bay, feeling, at once, the leather tighten making it near impossible to breathe and in one moment two things happen: his eyes snap closed, and his lips pull back from his teeth and graze the sensitive skin he's sucking.

His blood hums with adrenaline, with the drugs still diluting within and Will feels dizzy from lack of air, for want of more - though what he wants more of he can't say. He whimpers, relishes the deep breath of air he's allowed when Mason pulls out with a curse. He raises his eyes briefly, lips parted, dripping spit, red and abused.

Rough fingers dig hard into Will's cheeks - he can breathe now, finally, choking down air - but it's stolen on a gasp when Mason moves faster over him, shoving him to the floor, hard enough to drive the wind from his lungs as it comes up fast beneath Will's back. His fingernails sharp, savage, almost shaking as Mason scarcely holds at bay the desire to dig deeper, to feel blood hot beneath his hand.

"Never," Mason spits. "Never with your teeth."

He releases Will's face only enough to slap him brutally, sending his head back against the floor enough to make the room spin more than it already is, between the booze and the breathlessness, between the drugs and domination.

"Do you understand?" he snarls, teeth bared and gritted, as stark as the coat dropped against the floor, as white as the powder that he fed the boy. Another slap, savage, but restrained all the same from becoming a fist instead that would knock Will's teeth from his mouth and ensure that it never happens again.

Another whimper, a soft little whine and the spit against Will's lips is red now, from where he'd knocked his teeth against the inside of his lip enough to cut. He trembles, blinking quickly before directing his eyes up to Mason again and nodding in quick jerks.

"No teeth," he repeats, breathless, before sucking his bottom lip into his mouth.

And again that inescapable youthfulness, hair a mess and eyes rimmed red and tearing, cheeks flushed, the bridge of his nose the same. Will sniffs and swallows, releasing his lip again, and meeting Mason's eyes unblinking, waiting for the next command before he even attempts to get off the floor.

Never before so obedient, though never before left at such a disadvantage to fight back, as here. He conserves his energy, knows he will have more than one chance to try and find himself beaten down.

The sense of power is immense, whether justified or not, the knowledge that Mason readily and pleasurably ruins and ends lives for his own amusement without consequence. It's easy in this city, where the river runs fast and can carry a body down blocks faster than even throwing it into a carriage could. It's easy in this city, where money is so sought and so rarely found, but can make the difference between a turn in Newgate and a turn in Hyde Park.

But Will is beautiful and for those without means such as Mason has, that carries its own cost for company, one Mason is willing yet to pay despite this minor misdeed. The little sniffs, the little shivers of pain, the blush and the blood and the obedience, is enough to still Mason's hand from another strike.

He leans low instead, tongue gliding along Will's lower lip to taste the bloom of blood there and draw it into his own mouth instead, meeting Will in what would be a warm, passionate kiss in any other circumstance but this, with a strap still choking tight around his throat.

Everything Mason might want - youthful innocence and a tremendous tolerance for terror - wrapped up in a pretty package.

Another kiss, meeting briefly, almost sweetly, before Mason leans back against his heels and winds the leash around his fist to bring Will forward again.

"Finish it."

Will's lips part wider, eyes barely open as he chases the kiss with a long sigh before lifting his eyes to the man who holds him tethered.

He endures the tightening of the leather when he shifts, gets his knees under him, returns to be on all fours. He risks the displeasure, risks another slap, but presses his smarting cheek against the side of Mason's neck, almost like a nuzzle before bending obediently forward, down, to take his cock into his mouth again.

A moan, unfurling Will's body for his back to arch, his thighs to spread. A wanton, pretty toy who sucks until he reaches his limit, trembles and swallows more.

No teeth this time, only the rolling of his tongue and the soft sucking of his lips and the little moans that send vibrations rollicking down Mason's cock to gather rough in his belly. Will is braced for it when Mason snaps the leash taut again on his climax, groaning so loud it would be a wonder if those downstairs didn't hear it, braced equally when Mason pulls him by the hair to press him harder down and take it, every drop.

Mason holds him there until he's soft in his mouth, and when Will sucks him clean, he finally releases the boy with a short, curt sigh.

"Well," Mason says, and there is finally a stillness to him as he carefully buttons his trousers again, lips pursed. He tugs on Will's leash without meaning to, in adjusting himself again, and then sits forward, so much so that Will has to rest his chin against Mason's chest to watch him, eyes turned upward.

"Does puppy want to stay?" he croons, fingers curling beneath Will's jaw before pressing lightly back into his hair, affectionate now, mollified by his release.

Will swallows, pupils still wide, the blue darker, now. Sated from before, exhausted now. In truth, he has nowhere to go tonight - the man he had hoped to spend most of the evening with Mason had frightened away in order to claim Will himself. He shivers pleasantly and licks his lips.

“Very much,” he purrs, voice rough, throat abused and sore. He can feel the beginning of a bruise forming around his throat from the leather. Wonders if he will ever be allowed to walk around without that lash around him.

He’s hungry, thirsty, horny again after Mason’s abuse and his dark, cloying words.

In truth, Will wants to sleep for hours, wake somewhere he remembers falling asleep.

His lips curl up in a smile.

“Good boy.”

Mason pushes back from Will to stand, no more affection now, but simply a peculiar contentment in the swell of Will’s lip where he was struck, the harsh scrape at the edges of his words from the press of Mason’s cock against his throat, the way that the boy is pleased to remain on the floor as Mason looms over him, considering.

“Come,” Mason declares, tugging the leash for Will to follow him towards the bed. The leather is looped around the heavy wooden legs on which the bed rests, tied into a crude knot there that could be easily released, but Will is given a peculiar sort of trust in this - trust that he won’t loosen it and run, that he won’t unclip the leather from around his neck.

Trust that Will knows how thoroughly - possibly lethally - he would be punished if he did.

Mason pushes his hands back through his hair and frowns in thought as he looks down at the boy at his feet.

“You know, I usually hire people for this - to take care of the animals. I have a habit of getting distracted,” he sighs, hands on his hips. “Very busy. Lots of things to do.”

In truth, he’s puzzled by the fact that the thing at his feet is still alive, still mostly whole but for the welts raised and raw against its throat, not gasping and shuddering and cowering like they normally do. Not bleeding everywhere, not clutching broken bones, not pleading at him in fear. It’s just sitting there, at the foot of his bed, legs curled up neatly to sit on the floor, and watching him.

He frowns and turns to go, leaving the door open behind him.

Will watches him go, exhales slowly when he leaves and brings a hand up to slip just beneath the line of the collar, not to remove but to feel the damage, wincing when his fingers touch raw, sensitive skin.

The floor is cold.

As the night progresses it will be colder still and yet Will was not told to stay on the floor, merely implied that he would by the way he is tethered to the leg of the bed.

He lets his hand drop to the floor again, fingers splayed, bent, as he rises on his knees and considers how to climb into the bed without dislodging the knot holding him tied - he knows that, truly, will get him damaged.

The man will hurt him more, he knows that, it’s clear enough to read in his eyes and yet the promise of the pleasure surrounding that, the promise of the cloying smoke and the stinging powder, good wine and *praise*…

Will turns when he hears footfalls on the stairs again and stays as he is, kneeling with his arms folded on the bed. When he sees Mason he rests his head against them. No guilt, having done nothing wrong, but in that way presenting what more the man could take from him, what more he should keep him for.

Mason regards Will at length as he enters again, kicking the door shut behind him. In his hands are two bowls, in his expression a narrowed suspicion as he skirts around his desk and toes off his shoes.

He approaches almost warily, uncertain how to consider this creature that rests half against his bed, watching him with wide pupil-black eyes and tousled hair, stripped bare but for the leash and the tall black socks that Mason forgot to remove. It really shouldn't be here, Mason knows that much, but it is, still, all warmed by the firelight and so very pale and pink, no longer the angry red or florid purples he made in its skin before.

"Here," Mason says, curt, setting down both bowls by Will. "You see? I can take care of the animals as well. Papa wasn't always right about me."

He seems pleased as he steps away to untuck his tie from his vest, stripping off both and dropping them across the desk. In one bowl is water, surprisingly clean and sweet-smelling, nothing like the disease-ridden stuff that this neighborhood typically offers. In the other bowl is a steak-and-kidney pie, upturned but still steaming hot.

His suspenders are twisted from his shoulders and his shirt unbuttoned, humming off-key as his strips down to the soft cotton drawers that sit against his hips. For as unpleasant as he is in so many ways, to look at him is not - he is healthy, fit, clearly well-fed and from a place that has never known hunger as so many others have. Blonde hair askew on his head, more scattered fine across his chest, down along his lower belly where he scratches absently.

Shameless in this, as all other things, he snuffs out one of the gas lamps.

"When you're finished, you can sleep at the end of the bed, only. Do not touch me. I'm not responsible for what happens if you touch me. I am a very light sleeper."

Will licks his bottom lip into his mouth again, watches just as shamelessly until Mason looks at him and Will swallows, fighting the tilt of his smile but doesn’t look away. There is a silence between them, Will’s eyes on Mason until the other parts his lips, presses them together again in a swallow, and then Will allows his eyes to slip lower, down the length of his body and to the floor.

The pie smells amazing, Will running a mental checklist to see what he’s eaten in the last few weeks that comes anywhere close to being this hot or this filling. He had been fed at school, but rarely meat, rarely an entire pie.

He’s careful to set the hottest pieces aside to cool while he eats the others, fingers dirty with it but licked clean almost immediately as he rests with his back to the bed, one leg drawn up to rest the bowl against, the other out in front of him, toes flexing in his socks.

He nearly licks the bowl clean by the end, eyes up to where Mason is now, at this point by the window smoking a cigarette that smells unlike the smoke outside, or downstairs, or from any regular tobacco. He can’t see his eyes.

Will takes the bowl of water and carefully tips it to drink, savoring how clean it is, how good it feels against his throat before it settles in his stomach, heavy and full with his dinner.

He finds climbing into bed to be less of a challenge now that he’s allowed it, but it leaves him precariously close to the edge where he curls up, eyes up from beneath messy hair to watch Mason finally approach the bed again, apparently spare Will no glance as he crawls into it himself.

Mason draws his knees up beneath the blankets, plentiful and fat with downy feathers, seeming not to notice that Will is there at all, curled naked at his feet. A small vial - dark - is drawn from the nightstand and poured generously into his own mug of water, swirled three times, squinted at, and swallowed.

Laudanum, to help him sleep. Cocaine, to help him wake. Opium to make the day go by smoother and wine when he’s in a good mood - liquor when he’s not. It’s an easy enough routine, except when he takes too much of one, and has to balance it back out, or gets too excited, and wants more than he needs. He considers it now, as always, another pipe perhaps, but they’re so far away, and he puffs a breath up through his hair that makes it stand on end and removes his glasses.

Only then does his attention fall on the boy watching him, wide-eyed, from the foot of his bed. Mason’s lips purse.

“Go to sleep.”

The light is extinguished, and nothing more is said.

Breakfast

Chapter Summary

> *Suddenly, Mason's pale blue eyes blink wide and he grins, huddling in his blankets as though ruffling his feathers.*
>
> *"Puppy."*

Will wakes only because the snare around his throat pulls hard enough to cut off his air.

Eyes open slowly, blink, and for a moment he wonders why everything is still dark when quite clearly it's morning by the sounds of the city. He takes in a slow but hungry breath of air when it's no longer limited, grasping the blanket over him to pull it down past his eyes so he can see.

It's early morning, the sun trailing long on the floor, pulling enormous shadows from whatever it hits. Will yawns, adjusts the blanket enough to keep himself covered - surprisingly, blissfully warm - and peers over it to the head of the bed where Mason sleeps.

Will had not gotten much rest considering the fitful sleep of the other, though he had gotten one of the many pillows that tangled in the blankets when Mason had kicked it away. After that, the remainder of the drugs and the warmth did the rest. Will watches, keeps his eyes on the other until Mason shifts in a way that suggests it's not involuntary.

Then he closes his eyes, bare slits open to watch, and soothes his breathing once more. Curious. Cautious. Waiting.

Morning burns bright across the rooftops of London. Reflecting sharply off of new-fallen snow, shocking white against the dark slops where it hasn't yet fallen to muddle in the streets below, it illuminates the room brilliantly, past unclosed curtains, and refracts through their curvatures to scatter light against the walls.

And against Mason, squinting narrow in the furious flares.

There is something there, at the foot of his bed, and he's watching it through the burn in his eyes. Head pounding with every beat of his pulse, he tries to make sense of the shape of it, a lump of blanket and little more that he can see. A familiar enough thing, in theory, but he's usually very good about having them taken away afterwards, and somehow, this one is still here rather than in the river.

Mysterious.

Warily, Mason slides lower in the bed, grimacing as he passes through a spear of light, and he extends his toes beneath the blanket to prod the shape, once.

Will makes a soft sound and stretches, feigning sleep, hiding a smile behind the blankets he draws closer. There is something intensely amusing about watching someone so violent, so ruthless, be so utterly vulnerable. Like a guard dog confused by a frog.

It takes a lot not to laugh and Will just bites his lip against it, arches with a sigh before relaxing, lying as he is. Waiting a little longer.

Mason's brows furrow. Not just mysterious now, but troubling. Very troubling. It moved, and it sighed, and Mason hopes at least it's wounded or his morning is going to be off to a very poor start. He clenches his fingers into a fist, to make sure he still can, and slumps a little lower still.

A harder jab this time, more of a kick, really, and he sits up rapidly to watch the result, blankets drawn against himself.

Will catches himself before he can fully slip out of bed, though his knees thud to the floor and jar a painful gasp from him. He glares up out of the blankets at Mason whose eyes widen as though he’s just seen a ghost. It would be funnier if it didn’t dawn on Will then, in that one cold moment, that usually boys brought upstairs do not stay alive for the morning, do not get to wake up to the man watching them. He’s an exception - an older, seemingly terrified exception.

“You said I could,” he murmurs softly. “At the foot of the bed. Last night.”

He wishes he could yank the leather strap from his neck, to breathe properly, to rub the skin there, but he refrains.

Mason’s mouth still hangs open where the demand was perched on it, until intercepted by the boy who’s sitting there - just sitting there and watching him and talking at him.

His eyes narrow.

In his mind he sees the boy’s mouth - little more than that, really - wrapped around his cock, sees the trails of spit and scarlet lips as Mason fucked deep against his throat, heard the choking, clicking sounds as he struggled against it, felt him heave. He’s sure for a moment that he had held it there, fingers pressed to the boy’s nose to cut off his air there, too, until the boy’s entire body shook, and Mason came hard into the last shudders of his throat and -

“No,” Mason says aloud, drawing the thick blankets up around his shoulders almost primly. “That wasn’t you.”

He rubs his eyes and tries again, as Will watches him over the edge of the bed.

Bright blue eyes, red-rimmed with tears, focused upon Mason and Mason alone as he drove himself deeper with each thrust, a handful of hair in each hand, laughing. He let his hair go

only to close his hand around the boy's throat and squeeze, until his drumbeat pulse went still and his eyes turned upward with one last -

"Not. You. Either," frowns Mason, brows knitting pensive.

Split open from behind? Beaten blue? Caressed and coaxed softly to relax him enough to -

Suddenly, Mason's pale blue eyes blink wide and he grins, huddling in his blankets as though ruffling his feathers.

"Puppy."

Will blinks, lips barely parted though he remains oddly amused by just watching Mason try to sift through and remember him. Then he licks his lips and ducks his head, enough to see through the messy fringe to Mason.

"Puppy," Will repeats.

Kneeling is actually easier than lying down had been, the way the leather coils and doesn't tug Will where he is. He makes a soft trilling purr and bites gently against the sheets, eyes wide and blue in the morning, the drug flushed from him with sleep and water and sex.

Normally they're simply gone and Mason can just begin his day, but this one is breathing, whole enough to be here waiting - for what, Mason can't imagine - but the bite doesn't escape his notice, and he makes a thoughtful, drawn-out sound. Red-rimmed tear-bright eyes and wine-stained swollen lips did belong to this one, but for some unfathomable reason, he had let it live. Not only live, but live without suffering. Not only let it live without suffering but let it stay.

Here.

In his bed.

Slowly Mason unfolds from where his knees are drawn up and shifts forward. Head and mouth dry from the sudden drought of chemicals, he's careful not to move too quickly, keeping the blankets pulled around himself as he sprawls out onto his stomach, one arm folded beneath himself at the end of the bed where Will slept, and the other hand extended towards Will's mouth, brushing his cheek with the backs of his fingers before finally finding his lips.

"What *are* you still doing here?"

Will parts his lips and feels the fingers unfurl to push between them. He sucks gently, does not bite, before turning his head just enough for Mason's fingers to spread spit across his cheek.

"You told me to stay," he reminds him, smiling, tilting his head just a little so Mason can see that the leather is still there, around his throat, still chafing his skin.

He doesn’t remind Mason of his promise of good food, of wine and cocaine and the pipe and sex, splayed and sprawled on his stomach. He doesn’t remind Mason of the fact that he had told him, in essence that he was owned.

Will doesn’t have anywhere else to be.

He turns his head back, catches the fingers between his teeth just to hold them before enveloping them in the soft, wet heat of his mouth, velvet tongue against the tips as he watches him unblinking.

Mason's fingers curve into the bottom of Will's mouth, hooking behind his teeth to pull him closer by the jaw.

"No teeth," Mason insists, softly spoken in such a way that does little to hide the real menace behind the instruction. Their eyes meet, forced to do so by the way Mason cranes Will's neck up to face him, and only after holding him there for long, alarming seconds, does Mason release the grip to allow Will to suck his fingers again.

He works them at a steady pace into Will's mouth, revels in the feeling of the gentle sucking motion, the pressure of the boy's gifted tongue. Mason watches him like a child with a new toy, feet kicked up into the air behind him so that he can lean closer still. The push and pull of Will's lips is a fascination, and Mason adds another finger, pressing deeper now, three of them sucked tight.

"You know you probably should have left, right?" Mason informs him, grin appearing first just faint and small, now widening. "But I, for one, am very glad that you didn't. That mouth is just to die for. For *you* to die for, not me."

Mason rests his cheek on his arm, considering, as Will works his fingers for a moment more before he tugs them free them. Spit-slick fingers trail down Will's cheek to his neck, where the collar chafes and has left his skin raw and sticky. He skims them beneath it, loosening it, but not enough, almost playful as he swings a foot down against the mattress.

"And what does puppy want, hmm?"

Will sucks his bottom lip into his mouth, doesn’t wipe the spit clinging to his chin for the moment, just swallows, feeling Mason’s hand still at the motion, does it again so the man finally moves his fingers away from his throat.

It hurts, having him touch there. He doesn’t tell him.

Will grins, eyes narrowing as he smears himself on the bed, pushing up with his knees so he can do so without slipping to the floor.

“More from your little snuffbox. I want to splay on the couches downstairs and know you’re watching me grow bored. Or waiting to see when you do.” Another smile, a little laugh as well, turning his tone in such a way as to make it childish again. No lisp, but *something*, screaming of youth, of the age Mason *wants* as he continues. “Waiting to see if someone will

come and buy me a drink just to touch me under my shirt, to pull my belt free and touch there too."

Mason draws back quickly when Will slinks back onto the bed, jerking the blankets against himself. His knees pull up slowly, ready to kick again - harder, much harder, aiming for the nose - if necessary.

He knows he is saying things Mason doesn't want to hear, but he remembers the fascination before, the way the man had looked at Will like a novelty, for talking back, for *daring* to.

"I want to fuck." Will clicks the 'k', momentarily buries his face in the blankets before turning back to Mason. "But I will do anything you want with this mouth for a filling breakfast, for now," he finishes, entirely honest, tone innocent as though the rest had not been spoken.

Mason unfolds in inches only as Will purrs and whines at him, until he settles cross-leged and simply takes in the sounds and noises it makes. Whether or not he actually hears the words isn't clear until he reaches out and flicks loose the clasp on the makeshift collar. Frowning in thought, he prods his fingertips against the raw skin, and follows the curve of Will's neck up to his hair.

They snarl and snag in the pretty dark curls, yanking Will close with a cruel jerk.

"Anything that *I* want," Mason echoes. "That should have been your answer, Will."

He pulls the boy by his hair until he's in his lap. Mason brings a fistful of curls to his nose, sighing out a breath and turning his cheek against them, almost childlike.

"Beasts of burden exist to serve the masters who hold dominion over them. That's in the Bible, Will. Now I'm sure you're a god-fearing boy, aren't you? Of course you are. Then you understand how very important it is to serve and to please. For that, we are rewarded. Without that, we are punished. It's really very simple."

His lips are warm as they press beneath the curve of Will's jaw. He would be almost sweet in his hesitation if he didn't have Will's neck bent so sharply.

"Now, you're still learning, so I'm going to ask you again. What does puppy want?"

Will hisses at how hard he's held but wisely doesn't struggle. His hands settle loose against Mason's chest before he splays his fingers, stroking over skin, sighing out his answer with a click of his throat as he swallows.

"Puppy wants what Mason wants to do to him," he amends, lips parted on a soft sound of pain as lips find the raw skin and a tongue draws flat and rough over it.

Beneath him, Mason shivers, and Will considers.

Sounds of pain are just as easy to make as sounds of pleasure. The hand in his hair does not ease the pressure, despite his correct answer and Will adjusts to arch his back even more, bent almost backwards for Mason's pleasure.

Will is very well-behaved, Mason considers, watching as Will paws against his bare skin for a moment before pulling harder to lay Will on his back. He slinks atop him, seeking another taste of the warm, sweet skin shining clear where it's chafed, seeking to hear another little whimper when he sucks against the raw, metallic taste of the wound. It might be a pleasant change, to have one that listens, one that obeys and does as he wishes. He simply has to not tell Will everything he wishes, and then punish him accordingly when he does not perform.

Laying heavy atop Will, digging their hips together, he releases his hair in favor of pressing his hand beneath the younger boy's jaw to tilt it backwards. "What Mason wants," he drawls, grinning crooked, "is to fuck his puppy, and then have breakfast."

There's a peculiar sort of warmth to Mason like this, not awake or intoxicated enough to have lost what little sense has ever been afforded him, seeking now for the same satisfaction that most boys his age would. Sex and heat and perhaps even just the company of a being that doesn't tremble in fear when he touches them.

He misses it, a little - the trembling - and lets his teeth graze over Will's neck, lower to his collarbone, his chest, where he bites hard enough to leave a mark and only then reminds himself to stop before it breaks skin.

"You will be at my heel, Will. Maybe not literally - it would draw unwelcome looks in the street - but even if I let you stand and walk and sit on the couches like a person, you will be at my beck and call. When I snap, I want you at my side. When I whistle, you come," Mason croons, fingers tilting Will's head from side to side before he sits back on his knees and palms against himself through the thin drawers.

"Now, get it wet so I can fuck you."

Will nods quickly, taking the words, in, reading Mason when he has something to read, instead of a localized sandstorm. He is deeply enjoying the power he has over Will, adores the sound of his own voice telling him what to do. That's easy enough to appeal to, for Will, he can keep quiet until something is asked of him, be a pretty puppet until Mason tangles the strings and leaves Will to put himself back together.

He can't quite sit with the way Mason straddles him but he manages, a gentle sucking in of his stomach to slink upwards, curve his back and reach to palm Mason with his own hand instead before bending closer to suck his cock.

One thing that surprises Will is that Mason is not much older, a few years give or take, he is university age and yet he isn't there. No father, then, though he appears in conversation often enough for Will to know the man himself isn't missed, but the concept of him and his control is. Mason is mirroring, emulating, structuring his words and sentences as he remembers his father doing.

But the abuse is entirely his own.

Mason was never harmed as a child. He simply has harmed, always.

Will makes a whining sound when fingers curl into his hair again to bend him back and off, a delicate string of saliva connecting his bottom lip to the head of Mason’s cock until it snaps, and Will flicks his eyes back up.

He had made it messy, used a lot of spit. Instinctively, he knows he won't have to fake a struggle and sounds of pain as Mason fucks him, guessing correctly that he will, in essence, be fucked dry and unprepared. He bites his lip and wriggles, furrowing his brow, feigning fussiness so the grip in his hair tightens and Mason arches him up off the bed to stillness.

"Please," Will whines gently.

Mason's eyes widen when Will pleads, pupils sharpened to pinpoints in the bright morning light with raptor-like attention. His free hand catches Will behind a knee and shoves it to nearly his shoulder, spreading him obscenely. Every whimper, every little aching sound, piteous and faint, quickens Mason's blood, brings a curl of tension to his fingers, nails digging into Will's leg where he holds him unmoving. He tears them away only long enough to line himself up against the boy.

"Cry for me," Mason grins, pushing Will's leg back into place, both stilled for the moment. "I want to hear you whine, puppy."

With a shudder, he presses in, a surge of hips to bury himself to the hilt so far it stops Will's breath in his throat, eyes tearing. The sudden tight warmth squeezing hard around him is nearly enough to rip Mason's release free right then, having given Will no time to adjust, no fingers to work himself open, no more lubrication than the spit that he was able to coat across Mason's cock.

This one won't try to run, Mason knows, and slowly, with an affectionate stroke down Will's cheek, he releases the boy's curls of hair to watch him squirm instead.

The gasp comes first, choked and pained, before Will gives voice to the pain burning through him. He doesn’t need to act, here, finding his nerves are like livewires, awake and aware and every movement, however gentle, sends Will shuddering in pain. He can't struggle without causing himself more harm, Mason needs only stay pushed deep and Will will work himself to agony without help.

He whines.

Helpless noises when Mason leans in to kiss his throat again, almost affectionate if it wasn't so deliberately designed to hurt. And it hurts. Will feels a dry sob rip from his throat as the man above him pulls out, just a little, before thrusting hard back in.

"Sweet boy," Mason coos, and Will can feel the laugh vibrating just beneath the words. "Does it hurt?" The delight in the way Will physically jerks at any motion. Another breath and Will struggles in earnest, crying out when he’s pinned, when the stretch in his thigh starts to burn as the skin against his throat does with every cruel nuzzle.

"Mason," he gasps, a whimper pulled loud from him as he flexes his fingers, useless, held down, to tight fists and lax again. "Mason, please... please, it hurts..."

The plea draws a loud laugh now, an extraordinary pleasure as Mason kisses Will, a smothering thing as cruel as every other touch he sets against him, tasting every choked sob and cry as they tear themselves from Will's throat until the boy's chest heaves in short jerking gasps to try and find his breath.

It's intoxicating like no drug, like no combinations of drugs, could ever be - to hear his name said like this. *Mason Mason Mason*, a prayer to a merciless god from one who has offered himself up as sacrifice and earned that god's undivided attention. Pain inflicted without cause or reason beyond his own delight, punishment for no wrongdoing but simply because it suits him to do so. He gains relatively little joy from the act itself, though it hardly stops him from quick, shivering jerks of his hips, a perfunctory act next to the wild thrill of leaving Will literally breathless with agony beneath him.

He releases Will's leg to grasp his cock instead, not yet hard from the sudden savage searing sensation that feels as though it's going to split him two. Amusement glitters in Mason's eyes as he toys with it between his fingers, tugging the soft skin, not yet as brutal in this at least, but finding entertainment in the power that this, too, yields to him.

"What does puppy want?" Mason asks again, voice roughened now, taunting still, as he runs his tongue along the spit-slick curve of Will's mouth.

Will makes another helpless noise of pain and tries to twist away, finding his chin caught and turned back, held in place until he forces his own eyes up to meet Mason's. He knows he's flushed, skin hot from the bridge of his nose down his chest, and he can't deny that beneath the sharp knives of pain, it feels amazingly good to be stroked this way. His lips part on a breathless sound as Mason's fingers migrate lower and squeeze his throat in silent demand.

"More," Will moans, breath hitching on a sob of pain almost as though to counter the words. He wants to turn away. Burying his face in the sheets with his ass in the air would be easier than this.

"More?" A grin, delighted, intrigued, a slow pull before another harsh thrust that pushes Will further down the bed and draws another brief flourish of struggle. Will feels dizzy, he wants to cum and make this stop. Another hitch in breath but this one softened on the edges by pleasure.

"I could tear you apart," comes the amused observation, "hold you open and just keep going and you would still beg me for more, wouldn't you?" Will shudders, arches his neck and feels the hot palm close off more air. "And getting hard for me. When you're sobbing and fighting me in a way I won't forget to punish."

The tone slips to dangerous calm again, steady despite the now constant thrusting that leaves Will entirely breathless and bent up off the bed.

"Why?" Mason asks.

Will digs his heels into the mattress, struggles uselessly against the hand that holds his throat, the hand that pins one wrist hard enough that Will is losing feeling in his fingers.

"Why!"

"Because Mason wants it," Will sobs.

A violent shudder curls Mason's spine, fingers gripping Will's wrist, eyes squeezed shut with the force of it.

"Good," Mason fucks deep again, groaning low, "boy."

He lingers there, buried inside the twitching boy beneath him, shivering with the sudden euphoria of feeling his spillage leak around his cock, of seeing pained tears hot in the corners of Will's eyes when he blinks.

Mason leans low over Will, ignoring the squirm, and he presses kisses slowly, fondly, just there where the tears are still warm. A soft sigh escapes as salt graces his tongue, expression gentled for the first time since Will has seen him, cheeks flushed ruddy against his pale skin, fingers loosening from Will's wrist to frame his other cheek. Slow kisses follow the trail of tears down his cheek, to meet his mouth again and taste the last little breathless pants he can gather there.

Just as suddenly as it began, he draws back, out of Will, leaving him spread and splayed and aching, and he rolls off the bed to stand, dizzy, laughing at the lightheadedness as he roams to his desk to seek out his snuffbox. Two quick snorts and a brisk shake of his head, and Mason leans back against the heavy wood.

"Finish yourself. I want to watch." His glasses are shoved back onto his face, a cigarette lit from a match that burns acrid in the stifling air.

Will’s entire body is shaking, pain tensing his muscles to the point where trembling is all they can do, and he brings a hand to his face to press the tears away, to wipe away the memory of the kisses that were so intimate they terrify him. His other hand slips between his legs, obedient, and Will starts a slow, deliberate rhythm until he’s panting for air. The pleasure mingles with the pain, now, entire body hot with it, the sounds pulled from his throat are gentled into warm moans, like honey over skin.

He spreads his legs wider, hisses at the stretch, and brings his second hand down to press just against the perineum.

"Fuck, fuck -"

Back rigid in pleasure, lips tilted in a smile, then a grin, at how damn good this feels, how close he is already from how brutally Mason stretched him. He moans, a loud, low noise and twists his body as the hand against his cock speeds up, turns under the head to draw breathless laughter from Will until even that is stolen by another aching sound of need.

He can feel Mason's eyes on him like a weight, watching, enjoying, owning, and Will cums hard with a whimper, thighs shaking, toes curling in pleasure.

Mason's expression is unreadable as he watches, perhaps paying attention, perhaps somewhere else entirely. There's a nervous twitch, his hand against the side of his neck as Will finishes, and Mason's lips purse in thought.

In particular, his eyes linger past the glowing embers of his cigarette on where Will's fingers play against his opening even still, exploring the stretch of it, sensitive skin swollen red and angry. He isn't sure what to make of it, in truth, it's not unusual for them to feel around down there but -

He blinks upward as Will whimpers another little moan, coiling still in the warm currents of release. Mason slides an arm around his middle, the same terse posture he usually carries once his body is alight with enough drugs to bring the edge back to him, his other hand still holding the cigarette just against lips.

Pushing off the desk, he wanders closer, like a visitor to a museum, surveying some incomprehensible art of antiquity.

"You've made a mess. You should clean it up. All of it."

Will blinks, panting to catch his breath still as his eyes narrow a little at the words. Himself he can clean up easily, quick work, but the sheets - that he is fairly certain he *is* messing up - will not be cleaned with his tongue, not well.

His bottom lip finds its way between his teeth and his brows rise innocently.

“Do you want to watch that too?” he asks softly.

"Do I need to?" Mason responds, brows lifting above his glasses, cigarette held aloft. "Do I need to rub your nose in it until you lap it up? I will, and much more that just that, besides. I wouldn't recommend waiting. It's soaking."

Standing with legs slightly spread, assertive posture, Mason knows, he looms over the bed, somehow whiter, paler overall with the morning sun spread across his skin. The ice and snow embodied, without warmth or mind for those who might suffer beneath it.

"You'll do it or you won't see another pie for," he pauses, and laughs loudly. Uproarious cackling, nearly doubling over with it, cigarette extended as though to catch his breath, until he's able to do so and grins, "for a dog's age."

He laughs again and turns towards the dresser, to make himself ready for the day.

"Put your clothes back on when you're done. I won't have a messy animal."

Will watches him turn and lies back, fully plaint for a moment, before his hands go to his eyes and he just presses the heels of them down until he sees a kaleidoscope of stars.

He does obey, however, fingers sticky before he licks them clean, the sheet beneath him saved as much as his rough tongue can manage. By then, he knows Mason watches him, turned back with the cigarette still between his lips as his fingers work the buttons of his shirt up to the throat.

Will’s mouth is dry, he looks longingly at the bowl on the floor that had water in it the night before, how sweet it had tasted them, how good it had felt. He doesn’t *ask* for more, despite Mason’s assurances - insistences - that Will does nothing but. He expects that water will be forthcoming at breakfast, if not then he is quick enough to run downstairs and snag a bottle of wine under pretense of bringing it to Mason.

The thought makes him smile as he gathers his britches and slips them on, hissing as he has to bend to do it. And perhaps he’s honed his hearing enough, perhaps he’s simply used to not trusting anyone at his back, but Mason’s inhale at the sound is noted, remembered, and Will will make sure to whimper quietly the next time he slides into his pants.

The shirt he dons quietly, works the buttons quickly, practiced, before turning to Mason and deliberately dropping his eyes to the suspenders that still rest loose against his thighs.

The man is not unattractive. It’s one of the things that bothers and amuses Will at once. He wonders if his hair is soft if he runs his hands through it, if it naturally waves or curls and is simply out of shape. He doesn’t attempt to test either theory, but he does step close enough to be almost toe to toe with Mason again, unafraid, taking the cigarette from him to inhale it himself.

The drag scarcely graces his lips before the back of Mason's hand graces his face.

He scoops the cigarette from the floor as Will coughs choking, hand against his battered throat, and Mason snares Will by the jaw in the moment of opportunity afforded him, pinning him to the dresser with a clatter.

Mason licks his lip between his teeth in an expression born halfway between a grin and a snarl, and shoves his body against Will's to trap him further still. Untrained in any sort of combat skill - his hands are far too soft to have gone through any such harshness - but practiced, very much, in trapping smaller, wriggling things beneath him.

"Do not ever," he laughs, a sound as cold as the frost across the windowpanes, "*ever* touch what is mine, do you understand?"

A quick jerk of his wrist to shake Will, the cigarette's embers near enough for Will to feel the warmth against his cheek when Mason rests his arm alongside the boy's face.

"You ask. You beg. You do not touch. Ever. Do you understand."

Will grits his teeth, blinks until he can have Mason in focus and nods briskly, once, a pause, and then a few more times just to make sure his understanding is registered. His heart is hammering and he gently parts his lips with his tongue, eyes down to watch Mason’s mouth before swallowing gently.

“May I have a drag?” he asks, belated but there, voice soft. “Please.”

Mason presses his forehead against Will's, no gesture of affection but one of animal dominance, until Will's head is pushed against the dresser, too.

"Better," the older boy intones. He traces his fingertips down the curve of Will's cheek, the cherry of the cigarette near enough to singe, before he presses his fingers against Will's mouth to let him drag. Mason leans and lets his mouth meet the corner of Will's, pressed beside his fingers, grinning when Will takes a drag.

"Good boy."

He presses another kiss, just as swift, before drawing himself and the cigarette away, to stub it out in the ashtray on his desk. Leaving his suspenders dropped, still only in his trousers and shirttails, he pulls free the leash from the bedpost and loops it back around Will's neck.

"Come. Breakfast is served downstairs," he announces, and then adds, "to me. But you can watch."

“I -”

Will doesn’t say the rest, winces when the leather pulls against his sensitive skin, but follows. Turns out Mason wants merely to have the thing around him, not necessarily to lead him by it, which is a mercy; Will doesn’t think he would have been able to make it down the stairs unscathed otherwise.

Downstairs the den is quiet, just the sound of hooves on cobblestones outside, a few sighs from people - Will realizes with a start - sleeping on the farthest couches. The staff, he supposes, or what would pass for staff in this house. Two men, one the barman from the night before, the other Will doesn’t know, sleep with their heads on each other’s shoulders, cheek to cheek, legs hanging over the opposite ends of the couch to each other - conserving space.

In one of the smaller chairs, a little boy of no more than eight snoozes as well, curled into a ball. Will opens his mouth to ask and finds the tether pulling him along again, Mason lifting his hand once, in a strangely graceful, extravagant gesture, and the leather slips from his fingers again. A reminder, perhaps, when he doesn’t turn to Will but simply expects him to follow.

Will follows, walking on tiptoes against the cold wooden floor, arma wrapped around himself - it was much warmer upstairs, where his untucked shirt and bare feet didn’t matter.

He nearly walks into Mason when the other stops, turned to him, chin raised. Will lets out a breath, settles back to his heels and licks his lips, eyes obediently up. Mason doesn't reach for Will, arms folded across his stomach instead, shoulders hunched and lips thinned in thought.

"Do you think I've been too harsh?"

Will hesitates before even opening his mouth, a moment of self-preservation when facing a question that might as well be a cannon.

"Because you are very new," Mason adds. "Green horses don't know forward from back, let alone how to perform a piaffe. Do you think me cruel, Will, for expecting so much?"

When Mason doesn't immediately answer his own question, as he usually does, Will draws a breath. It might have been a crisis of conscience until the last accusation, a transparent bid for loyalty. Trust, on Mason's terms, powder-coated and wild-eyed.

Will's smile is just soft enough to seem demure, ducking his head to seem small, watching Mason through his hair to seem shy.

"No, Mason," Will answers. "Very fair."

He knows, on the flood of red to Mason's cheeks, that he's just performed his piaffe perfectly. A quick grin, a pat on the cheek, and Mason turns towards the back room. Presumably used for cards or dice at night, one table at present is overlaid with a white tablecloth, almost blindingly out of place in the dingy East End den. On it is coffee, steaming hot. A newspaper. Actual silverware and - perhaps most offensive if gratuitousness were the measuring stick - fresh roses in a vase, summery yellow and sweet despite the snow outside.

There are two chairs, an empty place setting at the second across from which Mason seats himself, facing the door.

"Sit," comes the predictable command, and he snaps his fingers at his side, watching Will over the top of his glasses. He looks older, somehow, as he takes up the paper, a mirror showing some scene long removed.

Will shifts his shoulders, glancing from the open chair to Mason. "Where would you like me?"

“At my side,” Mason responds, popping open the paper with a quick shake of his wrists, and taking up the coffee to sip. It’s hardly passed his lips when the door opens, and Mason is greeted softly in a language wherein the harshness of it hardly matches the tone of deference he is granted. One of the Turks in his employ, Will knows, having seen him keeping watch over the den the evening before. In his hands a tray, polished silver, on which he bears fat slabs of peppered bacon, several large eggs in cups, rough cuts of toast with melted butter, and a plate of soft, sweet-smelling cheese. It’s laid before him with little regard as he reads, and the man departs as discreetly as he arrived.

Will’s mouth is watering, enough that he swallows several times.

What's to stop him cutting and running? From grabbing a handful of whatever he can reach and bolting out the door? He's quick, perhaps not as fast as the little boys that work the den but he can hold his own.

Perhaps, he reconsiders, not with bare feet on a day that feels a minute away from snowing. And so he settles at Mason’s side as commanded, eyes up still to the plate that rests on the table.

It is all so over the top: the presentation, the flourish with which everything is delivered and done. Something out of a strange fairytale or a palace far from here that has never known grief. There is too much food for one person, even if Mason were in control of his own senses he would not eat so much.

All for show.

Will could whine for the lack of fairness. Instead, with all the restraint he can manage, he settles his chin gently on Mason's thigh.

The boy is spared a glance past the bottom of the paper, observed with a modicum of surprise that he's still there. That he's there at all, really. It's unusual for anyone but Mason to be here at this point, the newspaper having afforded enough time for him to forget that's not the case today.

Still, he smiles, crooked and brief, and folds the newspaper to set aside. A slice of bacon is plucked up between his fingertips and torn in half, eyes alight as Mason offers it down to Will. A shiver snaps sharp up his spine as Will's lips part to accept it, the tip of his tongue catching the little bit of grease there, unblinking as he eats from Mason's hand.

"Good boy," Mason drawls, and he seems to genuinely mean it, a moment of real pleasure for one who's so constantly starved for it. He feeds Will the second half of the slice as well, thumb tracing the curve of his lips before he turns back towards the table to crack open an egg and smear cheese across a chunk of bread.

There is a knock at the door and Mason startles so hard it makes him laugh, nearly knocking his coffee over in the process.

"Wow," he exclaims, pupils black with the sharp sting of adrenaline and drugs stirred suddenly by the sound. "Come in."

The slice of bread and cheese - egg smushed over it, bacon crudely stuck across it all - is passed to Will as the door opens, and dark eyes fall on the transaction when the man at the door stills. Tall, strong and well-built, glasses on his long nose and an utterly impassive expression pressed into his thinned lips. There is a moment of silence as the man's attention settles just briefly on Will, on the food he's being palmed, and finally on Mason.

"Good morning," the man intones, rich accent lacking entirely in surprise as Mason sweeps out a hand towards the empty chair and beams at him.

"Hello, Hannibal. As prompt as ever. Do you want coffee? There's coffee today. Or juice. Do you want juice? I brought in oranges from Spain if you want me to have one of the boys crush them up for you."

"Coffee is enough," the man - Hannibal - responds, and without having said the word sounds grateful. It's intriguing, the way he turns the language, the way he moves himself. Will resists the urge to turn around to look at him when Hannibal settles across from Mason, at Will's back, but he does take a bite of the food he's been offered.

"Always a stickler for the same thing, you should learn to branch out," Mason grins, the same strangely genuine smile he had given Will not long before. Whoever the man is, Mason is actually pleased to see him. "It's healthy to have an appetite for new things. It keeps the tedium away."

Will finishes the toast, considers Mason above him before moving to discreetly leave them to their meeting. He’s stopped quickly by a sharp tug to the leash that unsettles him back to the floor with a hiss. The lead loops under Mason’s thigh, pressed down when he sits, and just over his knee. Will is spared a look.

"Are you full? You're done then," Mason asks, states, a combination of both and neither. "You have somewhere to be, I'm sure. Important business. No? Then sit." He jerks the lead again to bring Will's cheek against his leg where Mason settles a hand into his hair, scratching softly through the dark curls.

If Hannibal is watching, he doesn't show it beyond a faint purse of lips. An egg is taken, a piece of toast torn into strips to dip into the yolk, as coffee is brought in, and a bowl of water placed on the floor beside Will. The man who brings it may as well be blind for how little notice he pays the boy at Mason's feet.

"What time does the shipment come in?"

Hannibal turns a glance towards Mason from the careful arrangement of breakfast on his own plate, finishing the bite of bacon before he speaks. "I should be back by nightfall with it, barring unexpected stupidity."

"Isn't that always the way?" Mason snorts, passing another piece of bacon to Will despite his admonishment mere minutes before. "Really, you'd think we're not paying them or something. We are paying them, aren't we?"

"Enough."

"It's like we're not paying them to do this,” Mason continues, unabated. “Like we're asking for it out of the kindness of their hearts."

"It is a risk for them," Hannibal suggests with a shrug. "And the gods doing what they please, travel across the seas can take longer than expected."

"That'll be - ha," Mason laughs, a single loud note. "That's what I'll tell them when they show up banging down the door as soon as the sun's down. I don't have any because of the gods. Gods and ships and idiots."

Curling his fingers in Will's hair, Mason strokes down softly against his cheek, turning them under his chin to lift the boy's face towards him. He doesn't turn to look, to see the bright blue eyes focused upward, but seems mollified in simply knowing he's being watched.

Will’s cheeks are dark from the scrutiny from both men. There is a feeling of being watched, being seen, even if it isn’t immediately happening. The humiliation is palpable.

He listens to them discuss business, discuss things that he thinks - were he someone other than himself - would break the business if known by the wrong people. He endures the touches, disturbingly soft compared to the harsh snagging of the morning, the sharp slaps from the night before.

He is as fascinated by Mason as he is terrified of him. Insanity is entirely unpredictable.

He drops his eyes, finds the fingers against his chin pressing harder until he looks up again, finding Mason just as engrossed in conversation as he had been, but somehow he'd *noticed*. It makes Will's blush deepen, over his nose and cheeks and down his neck.

He swallows.

Keeping his eyes up, Will turns his face just a little, just enough, to nuzzle against Mason's thigh, parts his lips to take the smooth skin of the meat of his thumb into his mouth to suck.

If he is to be displayed, he will distract.

"The Chinese?" Mason asks. His fingers twitch in response, but it's the only reaction that Will can see as the older boy watches Hannibal over the top of his glasses.

"Apparently."

"The Turks are closer. The Chinese?" he asks again. "What the hell would we want with the Chinese?"

"They're willing to compete. The cartels have made substantial claims in America - San Francisco is theirs, entirely, and New York increasingly." Mason glances to his side as Hannibal speaks, and presses his thumb against Will's tongue, deeper into his mouth. "If it is a matter of money, it is in our favor to speak with them, at least," Hannibal continues, sipping his coffee. "If loyalty, then I will decline."

Mason rolls his eyes towards the ceiling and slumps back, his free arm draped over his stomach. "Even a meeting, Hannibal, even a meeting to discuss - even discussing a meeting to discuss is problematic. You're smart. You know this. Is it worth their chasing us down with scimitars for it?"

An easy shrug unrolls through Hannibal's shoulders and he dabs his mouth with a napkin. "I merely offer news, Mason, what you do with it is entirely up to you." The napkin is folded three times over, and placed carefully beside his plate, equally tidy despite having eaten off of it. The older man's attention finally settles on Will at length, a passive observation. "Where did you find him?"

For a moment, Mason appears a bit lost, the change of conversation unfollowed, requiring him to take stock and retrace until he feels another soft pull of lips against his finger.

"Oh, *this*?" he grins, wrapping his fingers around Will's cheek to work his thumb deeper into his mouth. "This is my new pet. Will, this is Hannibal. You will treat him as you treat me. He is my *friend*. Do you understand?"

A hum is all Will can manage and it seems to be enough. He's growing used to Mason rarely expecting answers to his questions.

"Would you believe it, I found him *here*. Came all on his own. Desperate little thing, followed me upstairs like a puppy so that's what he became." Mason pulls his thumb from

Will's mouth and rifles softly through his hair before snagging hard and twisting so Will has to catch himself against the cold floor or risk being entirely upset onto it.

"He's slowly learning to be a good boy." Almost a lament, as though Mason had expected and wanted much worse, much less devotion and obedience. Will shivers, thinking what else the man wants to do to him and why he's even here. He says nothing. Behind him he hears a gentle sigh of almost exasperation.

"You never bring them to breakfast."

Mason's eyes finally leave Will's and he glances up, brows raised as though surprised by the question.

"Well I couldn't just *leave him*, Hannibal. Puppies need training. Who knows what he would have done up there alone." Mason's tone matches Hannibal's, now, as though speaking to a child. "The fact that he's awake at all deserves reward."

A sigh, a shrug, and Mason tilts his head to look at Will again, still bent awkwardly the way he holds him. His expression gentles and it sends Will's blood entirely cold.

"And he is such a beautiful boy, I could look at him all day if I had the time." A jerk, hard, and Will is twisted further so he can see Hannibal properly now - or so Hannibal can see him - gasping for air as the leash is not released enough to accommodate the movement. He draws in breaths through gritted teeth until they part on a pained pleading noise.

"Oh, I'm sorry. I keep forgetting we're so close. Attached at the hip already." Mason lifts himself just enough from the chair to loosen the leather enough for Will to choke on a breath and pitch forward, held by only the rough fingers in his hair. One of his hands seeks out too far, for balance, and upsets the bowl of water at his side.

A click of the tongue and a sharper jerk to his hair so Will can see him upside down.

"That was rude, Will. Someone took the time to get you that, I won't bother next time, until you learn manners." A shove, hard, and Will does pitch forward now, on all fours, splayed and panting, anticipating the next command even as Mason waves a hand in the general direction of the mess.

"Lick it up."

Will's fingers curl to fists against the floor, and he raises his eyes to watch Hannibal, effectively kneeling at *his* feet now, before narrowing his eyes just slightly and biting his bottom lip. The heat from the look Hannibal gives him sends Will's entire body to shivers, but he keeps his eyes on him when he bends to obey, lips parted and tongue red and warm against the floor.

Hannibal watches the boy unabashed as he lights a cigarette and settles back into his chair. His tone remains pleasantly conversational as he observes the careful curl of Will's tongue against the filthy floorboards.

"Are you sure he won't be missed?"

"Are they ever?" laughs Mason, winding the leather leash around his fingers, an absent tangle of nervous energy.

The cigarette is ashed carefully into the empty coffee cup and Hannibal meets Will's eyes evenly, a passive fascination as the boy - old enough to put up a reasonable resistance if he wished it, bright enough to know better than to try - picks up the bowl and rinses the taste of the floor from his tongue with heady swallows of water.

"He looks well-kept," Hannibal warns gently, standing to step closer to Will. "Relatively clean, fed adequately well." He bends a little lower and hesitates, regarding Mason over his glasses. "May I?"

The deference is appreciated and Mason folds his arms with a ruffling movement, a pleased shiver and a gracious smile. He sweeps his hand wide, as though eminently gracious. "Hannibal, you? Always. Please."

A very serious nod is tilted towards Mason, and Hannibal crouches onto his heels. Warm fingers trace the pale shadow of a bruise against Will's cheek.

"Hannibal was a doctor, once," Mason chirps. Hannibal glances towards Mason, who's not looking at all but rather picking the fat off a strip of bacon. The older man's attention turns back to Will with all the severity necessary for Mason staring directly at them.

"He will have parents asking after him, Mason. Friends. Professors. You can tell a great deal about someone’s social class by their health - whether or not they can afford it, in essence. Can you smile for me, Will?"

Will blinks, eyes directly on Hannibal’s, he notices they’re almost red around the edges, the way the brown is so rich. With a swallow he smirks, a knowing look before he licks his lips open and offers an entirely false grin so the man can check his teeth.

Hannibal presses his thumb gently to the boy’s gums, checking for bleeding, seeing if he has any teeth loose, if he is at all unhealthy. With a subtle turn of his head, Will shields any view of Hannibal’s hand from Mason and parts his teeth to bite the fingers there, just gentle, tongue out to trace the tips when Hannibal stills and doesn’t move them away.

“Where are your parents?” Hannibal asks, tone entirely indifferent, though Will notices the fingers press just barely deeper into his mouth before they’re removed so he can answer.

“Stoke-on-Trent,” he replies, smile soft again as he settles to sit more comfortably, he straightens his shoulders when Mason tugs the leash for his own amusement, eventually throws out his arms behind himself to rest balanced, body open for inspection and observation. He swallows.

“I went to school here.” Will licks his lips, eyes narrowing in amusement. “Once.”

Hannibal tilts his head just so, a distant hint of amusement at the words, with an edge of dominance that might be allowed to manifest as dangerous were they keeping only their own company.

"He speaks Greek, can you believe it?" Mason snorts, laughing.

Lips curving into a faint smile, Hannibal slips looser the lead with a tug from Mason's fingers, just enough that he can press against the raw skin there. There is no intent to injure in the touch, but rather a careful push around the outskirts of the chafing. He leans a little closer still, and draws a breath.

It's held for a long time before he finally sighs it out again, "You will need to put a salve on his neck. And I would suggest another means as to leashing him, if feasible. You do not wish it to become infected, I would assume." Hannibal stands and allows his fingers to graze up Will's cheek before falling free. "I could be wrong on the last point."

"No," Mason frowns, agreeing grudgingly. "I dislike the smell of it."

"Most unpleasant," Hannibal agrees, hands folded neatly in front of himself now as he stands over the boy, almost quite literally, feet on either side of Will's knees as the boy arches backwards beneath him.

Entirely too appealing, and entirely too dangerous with Mason watching-without-watching from beside them.

"I don't speak Greek," explains Hannibal softly in French. "Do you speak any other languages? What did you study?"

Will blinks, still feels the heat of fingers against his face as he slowly tugs together deliberately forgotten word structures and pronunciation.

“Latin.,” he replies quietly, after a long pause, eyes up. He shifts enough to mask the spreading of his thighs as an adjustment to the position, making himself comfortable. His knees just brush against Hannibal’s shoes now. “French was compulsory,” he adds, in the language, his own accent far from refined but not atrocious. He feels his cheeks color with the *pleasure* that radiates off of the man in front of him. It’s staggering.

“I studied everything teachers anticipate will benefit me in later life. I highly doubt I will use more than a bare minimum of what I learn,” Will continues, before his lips part on a gasp of pain as the leash is tugged tight around his throat again.

“Don’t taunt him,” Mason drawls, eyes up to Hannibal again. “His mouth is very useful but he gets disobedient when he speaks with it. And he’s been so good this morning, barring one… misunderstanding.” A smile then, bright, and Mason bends to draw his hand over the bruise on Will’s face again, slapping it gently in reminder.

“Unless of course you want him strapped for your pleasure, then by all means.” A sigh, a slight loosening of the leash as Mason sits back and takes up his cup of coffee again. “Who am I to deny life lessons to the young.”

Hannibal regards Mason with something akin to amusement, and turns back towards Will. Careful fingers tug straight the starched cuffs of his shirt as he adds, in French, "You should be cautious to whose guidance you choose to listen. There are many voices, some worth hearing more than others."

With this, Hannibal steps free of the boy. Mason watches his movement.

"What did you say to him?"

"I merely explained that he would be wise to listen," Hannibal responds, unruffled as he plucks up the last slice of bacon from his plate. "From his speech and manner, he is not low enough to be humble, nor high enough to be fully self-aware. Resolutely of the new middle-class, but with a gaze towards the stars. Whether for ambition or because they are rolled to the back of his head remains to be seen."

Mason glances from the doctor to the boy, brow furrowing in consideration. The word sticks - ambition - and Mason feels that familiar icewater trickle up the back of his spine. His gaze sharpens and before he can draw a breath to speak, Hannibal gently interjects.

"You'll ensure it is the latter, I'm certain." He offers a genial smile, and adds, "Feed him an orange. Prevents scurvy. And although his French is passable, his indefinite articles could use work. If it pleases you, you could give him a stripe for that on my behalf."

Mason grins a little, moving to stand, jerking Will's lead without apparent notice as he extends a hand out towards Hannibal. "As though I need a reason!"

They shake, amicably, and agree to meet again in the evening. Hannibal spares Will no further attention, and only after both doors have closed behind Hannibal's exit does Mason turn back towards Will.

The boy merely lifts his eyes, watching, tension coiling in his stomach with everything Hannibal had said, in both languages. He considers the advice, content, for the moment, on self preservation, not listening to either him nor Mason unless the words prevent him pain or death.

He doesn't flinch when Mason steps closer, but his eyes close quickly in case the man seeks to strike him across the face, no care for his eyes.

He finds, instead, that Mason simply returns to his seat.

"He is a smart man, our Hannibal," he murmurs, and Will hears the newspaper as it's opened again behind him. "A smart and very careful man."

The last, Will feels his muscles coil at, a nauseating tug in his stomach. He thinks of his eyes. He thinks of the hunger nearly radiating from him and wonders if it had been honed, like a beam, at Will or if Mason had felt it too.

"May I have an orange?" Will asks at length and is met with a soft snort of a laugh.

"You can ask one of the Turks for one," Mason replies. "They'll give it to you."

The leash is loosened enough that Will can stand to go do so, before Mason's words catch him at the door.

"And bring my crop down when you return.” His eyes are still fixed on whatever has his attention in the paper before he flicks them, light, wide with pupil, towards Will. “And the oil."

He flicks the paper again and turns back to it.

"It would be rude to beat you with untreated leather."

Meeting

Chapter Summary

> *"You think yourself very clever, little lamb, and perhaps you are. But you have wandered into the domain of lions with insatiable and savage hungers. To whom will you go, Will? To whose claws will you come for protection, knowing they are sharp enough still to rend you into pieces?"*

Will finds himself staring up at the pressed tin ceiling of Mason's bedroom. In truth, he has no choice, with slick leather wrapped and knotted around wrists and ankles, snapped bowstring tight to the bedposts. He had been given one of the sweet Spanish oranges, from the same man who brought him the bowl of water in the morning and Mason his breakfast, and was allowed to partake in the pipes for the better part of the afternoon.

Mason had come and gone, from room to room, alternately starkly quiet and terrifyingly loud. Hard to follow, through the haze of florid smoke, precisely what defined his pleasure or distress - they manifest much the same - but periodically he would drape himself across Will on the couch, sigh about the burdens of being a businessman, and then just as quickly push powder up his nose and vanish again.

Like a ghost, pale white in such a dark den, coming and going and making incomprehensible noise as it does.

And so when he lingered longer, fingers teasing through Will's hair before snarling it tight enough to tear, and dragging the boy bouncing up the stairs behind him, it was an alarming moment after the relative peace of the day.

Will shifts a little, pulls against the bindings just to test them, and glances towards Mason at the dresser, twisting out of his suspenders.

He's smoking, again, the plume curling almost sensually from the end of his cigarette up to the ceiling. Will thinks, again, how he looks rather handsome when he's calm, how he cuts a very nice silhouette when dressed up.

Mason ducks his head and kicks off his shoes, hands up to work the buttons of his shirt as he bares his teeth to exhale before curling his lips over the filter again for a long drag.

"It is *difficult*, Will, so many people don't listen, so many listen and don't *obey*."

Hand up, cigarette away, a sharp brief exhale before Mason turns, just in his pants now, and gestures widely with the smoke following his movements.

“You tell them one thing, they do the other, and there are only so many fingers you can break before you run *out* of them.” A laugh then, but not as exhilarated as it had been most of the day, he’s winding down, growing tired. Falling low from the high he usually seeks in the evenings.

Will swallows.

“But you obey, don’t you, Will?” A smile, another long deep drag that lights up the end and forces Mason to ash the thing after into a glass on his side table. “Come when I call. Hold out your pretty little limbs for me to tie down. The leather looks good on you. Pity about the collar. I might find you a wider one. A belt to loop against your neck.”

Will swallows, turns his head as Mason settles his weight on the bed beside him and parts his lips, eyes hooded, when the cigarette is offered to him in turn. The smoke is sweeter than tobacco, headier than the smoothness of the pipes downstairs, and Will makes a gently pleased sound, arching up, curling his fingers around the straps that bind him.

The cigarette is held there just a little too long - long enough for Will to feel the burn in his lungs and squirm. The plaintive sound sends a shiver through Mason and only then does he draw it back to hold between his teeth again, grinning when Will coughs out the smoke.

He skims a hand along Will's neck, across the scabbed scrapes there, down over his chest. A cold touch, bloodless chilly fingers, long and elegant that ply along the lines of Will's young body. They bump down ribs, across his belly full with food, grasping a hip and missing his groin entirely in favor of pressing into the join of his thigh.

"Whine for me, puppy," Mason breathes, words snarled around the cigarette still smoldering between his teeth. There is a darkness in his eyes, stormclouds across the pale blue, but he is very still.

Alarmingly still.

Until his fingers dig savage into the soft skin, shoved into the tendons where Will’s leg meets his groin. The rest of Mason remains unmoving, and unmoved. Will gasps, squirms, makes a soft sound of pain, then a louder one, hands gripping the straps hard for something to hold onto, but he finds no mercy for the motions, none for the sounds he makes until they’re weak and helpless.

“Mason -”

“Good boy,” Mason sighs, turning his fingers to send another electric jolt of pain through Will’s body so he arches again, gasps and chokes on keening little cries. “Say my name again.”

And Will does, tone higher, sweeter, lilted, vowels rounded, over and over until Mason finds the pitch he wants for the night, like tuning an instrument. Only then do his fingers slip away to gentleness, caressing cold knuckles down and back up the inside of Will’s thighs as he trembles, already covered in a thin sheen of sweat from the pain. The cigarette he puts out in the glass where the rest of the ash lies soft already.

“I am so *tired*, Will,” Mason complains to him, pushing up to set his knees on either side of Will’s hips, pressing down until Will gasps with the proximity, ducks his head to meet Mason’s eyes when the other settles. “Such a long and tedious day and I have yet another meeting. The city never sleeps, here, Will, *business* never sleeps. It is a sleepless world for sleepless men.”

Will swallows, ducks his head further, lips parted, to seek out Mason’s own, finds the other only grinning before he laughs, just out of reach enough for Will to feel the soft puffs of air against his lips. Cool fingertips press Will's lips out of shape instead, too much movement to allow the younger boy to kiss them or draw them in against his tongue. Mason sighs, slides his fingers past Will's lips, and traces his teeth instead.

"You wouldn't know a thing about that, would you? What it's like to work hard. To really struggle. I *suffer*, Will. I suffer for my work."

Whatever he's search for in searching Will's expression isn't found and he frowns, sliding up to sit heavy across Will's stomach.

"I suffer, Will, so that pretty things like you can lay around and *enjoy* yourselves. You do, don't you? You did today. You smoked my resins and you ate my food and you laid across my couch." A roll of his hips to grind his erection against Will's stomach brings Mason closer, leaning over the boy and pushing fingers through his dark hair. He draws his nose up against Will's cheek, too far away to risk being kissed, breath warm against him like an animal.

A predator.

"Don't get me wrong," intones Mason, "I enjoy looking at you. Really, you're quite charming even for your age. It was nice. It was nice to see you there, enjoying yourself. You're really very lovely. It was nice to see you enjoying everything I work so *hard* for."

The storm is building, tumultuous, something singing through Mason's blood in crashing waves, rising higher with every heartbeat.

"But who," he asks, rising up onto his knees over Will, shucking his pants lower, nearly kneeling on Will as he twists to remove them, "who works hard for *Mason*? Tell me, when is it *Mason's* turn to lay around and enjoy himself? I want to know when it's time for someone *else* to work hard and suffer for me. Who's going to do that?"

The pants are strewn past the end of the bed and Mason slides lower, jamming his knees behind Will's thighs to force his legs up, straining his ankles against the straps. Icy fingers dig into his legs and pull pale, soft skin beneath them as he speaks through clenched teeth.

"Who's going to suffer for Mason?"

It isn’t a trick question, and Will swallows hard, tilts his head back, closes his eyes. The breath comes hot against his neck, before teeth close there, hard, partially over the raw skin which a hot tongue traces. Will makes another sound of pain, jerking at the surprising sharpness the length of a tongue can bring.

“You will,” Mason answers, low, purred, before a nuzzle sends Will’s head back further, his back arching as his thighs tremble with how wide they’re being spread. “You will suffer for me. A sacrifice on an altar, just for me. Say it.”

Will’s throat clicks on a swallow.

“I will suffer for you.”

“Yes,” hissed, exhaled, and Mason nearly melts against Will with it, almost like a deflation, stress leaving him with the words he wants to hear intoned soft against his hair in a voice that grows less and less steady. He clutches Will harder, tilts his head to watch him. “Tell me you want to.”

“I want to,” Will sighs, shuddering when Mason rocks harder against him, a hard, heavy promise of pain. Will still remembers the morning.

“Tell me to hurt you.”

Will shudders, the words so soft, so gentle against him he wants to cry. Mason is terrifying in his mania, frightening when he is exhausted from it and seeks a high that only violence can bring. A hand slips up to snag around Will’s throat and his lips part in answer, against his better judgement, against everything in his body screaming for him not to.

And that alone draws a laugh from Mason, and the older boy returns to himself enough to press his laugh into Will’s neck.

“You do, don’t you, you really do want it. We are so alike, Will, do you know that?” A sigh and Mason pushes himself up, a hand down to rub between Will’s cheeks, not enough to spread or prepare him, but enough to bring shudders of pleasure to Will’s skin, to harden his cock as Mason watches.

“We thrive on pain. Without pain we get nowhere. There would be no business. There would be no den and no poppies and no money.” He presses a finger into Will without warning and watches Will arch, gasp at the intrusive feeling, before he curls his finger, seeking. “Without pain there would be nothing. One must toil and toil and work and sweat and bleed. And you will do that for me, my Will, my beautiful boy.”

Sparks of pleasure send Will’s spine rigid and he moans, a loud low thing that spreads Mason’s lips into a manic grin.

“Do that again,” instructs Mason. Another finger is added for encouragement, and Will’s voice breaks on the sound with a sigh, body trembling.

"We're a good match," Mason sighs, his movements made liquid by the sweet sounds. "Not made in Heaven, though. I'm not a blasphemer, Will. I am," he laughs, "I am many things to many people, but not that."

He splays his fingers wide, forces them deeper despite the friction, bends and squeezes them.

"I do love the sound of prayer, though. Papa raised us right, in the church, I find it soothing. The call of the lost to a God that - let's be honest - has little interest in that kind of helplessness. There's a poetry to that because even though no one answers, they," he laughs, genuine and bright, "they just keep hoping it'll help, don't they?"

Will aches another long, shuddering keen, and Mason watches rapt as the younger boy's body bucks upward beneath him. The movement is surprising, real pleasure there despite what must - Mason assumes - be quite painful, and for a moment he wonders if the straps are even necessary. If this boy would stay even without them.

He laughs again, and pulls his fingers out to rub himself instead, already hard despite the copious drugs that should - in any normal body - still his need for this.

"I'm going to make you pray," Mason decides, and spits in his hand.

The click of the door is nearly deafening in that instant, and Mason huffs a sigh. Exasperated, his eyes roll towards the ceiling. "What?"

He whips his head away from the sobbing boy beneath him, teeth clenched and lips curled, and meets Hannibal's gaze. The older man doesn't let a reaction touch a muscle, but to glance towards Will, and then back to Mason perched between his thighs.

"I'll retu-"

"No," squints Mason. "No, because you won't, you'll wander off again and I won't see you until breakfast. Did you bring it?"

Hannibal runs his tongue along the front of his teeth, mouth closed and perhaps a little tense. "I did. We should be adequately stocked for several weeks, another ship due in two."

"Good, very g-" he hesitates, and regards Will beneath him. "I don't hear praying."

Will’s eyes are wide, watching Hannibal with parted lips and cheeks flushed in humiliation at being seen like this before his eyes return to Mason almost reluctantly. A shift, a harsh push, and Will is arching off the bed in pain, writhing to get away from the pain he is tied down to endure.

“Please, please...”

A sharp slap and fingers in his hair again to tilt his head back, part his lips on pained whimpers.

“I hear pleas, I don’t hear prayers. Will, I know you know them.”

A swallow, thick in his throat, and Will sobs, flushed, humiliated, *hard*, before he draws in a sharp breath and begins a soft litany in Latin.

Hannibal resists a sigh, glancing back down the stairs from which he came, and closing the door politely behind himself. An absurdity, really, considering how loud the bed will clatter against the floorboards into the room below.

"Is that - are you *Catholic*?" Mason breathes against Will's neck, with another sharp drive into him to disrupt his words and choke them short.

A brow lifts as Hannibal lights a cigarette from the silver case on Mason's desk. "It is Latin," the man confirms, hands cupped around the match.

"That's what they speak, right? Heathens." His laughing sigh is almost fond as Mason draws back slowly, and works himself back in, a relentless, languid push. Turning his mouth against Will's cheek, he mutters, "You Catholics. I knew there was a reason you're so good with your mouth."

Hannibal nearly smiles at this, catching just in the corners of his eyes as he sighs out a cloud of fragrant smoke and eases down into Mason's chair to wait, and watch. Mason is entirely distracted now, in the agony of Will tight around him, in the ecstasy of choked breaths, strains of prayer panted past him.

"I was told that this parcel is particularly powerful," comments Hannibal almost absently, fingers pressed to his lips.

Mason blinks, as though startled to find himself here, doing this, to see Will beneath him with those lovely little droplets of tears clinging to his lashes. "Is it," he responds, voice rougher than before as he slows his pace, his tone remarkably conversational as Will pulls at his restraints, sobbing.

"Mmm," agrees Hannibal. "So I was told. I have not tried it. I have no taste for it."

"I don't understand you, Hannibal," Mason sighs through gritted teeth. "You work here, you could have as much of the stuff as you want - "

"Precisely that reason," interjects Hannibal gently. "I have little interest in those things that are easy for me to acquire."

Another laugh from Mason and his hands clench in the sheets as he ducks his head, rolls his hips forward against Will until he hits a spot, there, and Will shudders and moans, skin flushing red, lips parting and brows drawing in the most exquisite twist of pleasure and pain.

“Please, Mason -”

“I would punish you for not praying but I *love* the way you say my name like that.” Another slow push and Mason thrusts in deeper, enough to have Will flinch in pain, gasp entirely breathless as his eyes open wide, pupil-heavy and dark blue and he whimpers louder.

Hannibal watches.

Studies the tensing muscles, the way Will is arched entirely off the bed now, just his hips and shoulders to it the way Mason has him tied, the way he holds him vulnerable. He sees the way sweat slips down his ribs, the way he *trembles* with it, desperate and needy and on the edge of pleasure already.

He takes another drag of his cigarette and holds his breath momentarily when Will's eyes seek his own. His cheeks flush darker, and Hannibal is amused to see that Will is genuinely humiliated by this. Perhaps the boy truly hadn't been exploited this way before, perhaps his walk in the slums had ended in a way he hadn't expected or particularly wanted. Yet now he lies, stretched prone and held open to be fucked, and he is that, quite hard, the springs squeaking, the entire bed groaning with it.

And now that Will has found Hannibal's eyes he is not looking away from them, fear and desire and need swirling within like smoke.

Then Mason bites him, hard, just against the collarbone and Will sobs, eyes closing in a quick clench. He resumes his whispered prayers, sobbing them, choking on them, stuttering, until his entire body is a mass of tension, tight and wired.

"Please, please, Mason, please let me..."

The slap is sudden and brutal, snapping loud enough to startle the gasp right out of Will. Cruel fingers dig into his throat, push his chin up to force his head back, and Mason breathes against his mouth.

"This isn't about *you*," he spits. Sharp thrusts punctuate his words. "This is about *Mason*. Not *Will*. What did you promise me?"

Will swallows hard, throat working roughly and eyes trained towards the ceiling. He draws a breath and Mason hits him again, fucking faster into him now, breathless, his hips pulsing with each word.

"What did you promise me *Will!*"

Rabid, now, snarling against him, and almost so quietly as to be inaudible, Hannibal murmurs beneath his breath, past the cigarette perched on his lips. "You will suffer for him," he reminds Will, in Latin. He wasn't here then, Will knows, blinking wide.

He wonders how often Hannibal has sat in on this same scene, and how many boys he's seen so splayed and presented.

"I will suffer for you," Will whimpers, voice pitching higher before he forces another choked prayer into his voice.

It's enough for Mason, this tearful shudder, and he climaxes with a yelp, toes pressed into the mattress to push himself as deep as he can inside the boy, forcing his hips off the bed.

Will is breathless, helpless held as he is, and he curls his lips into his mouth with another sob as Mason finally lets his weight drop against him, pressing him to the bed. Hot breath against Will's cheek, lower to his throat, and then a kiss so gentle it's almost reverent and Will shudders with it, entire body crawling with goosebumps at the sensation, at the sickening gentleness.

“Oh, suffer you will, beautiful boy - you're made for it.” Another kiss, brief and almost childish against Will’s cheek before Mason pulls out and sits back, one hand up to run through his hair, eyes hooded as he looks down at the boy still spread for him, still flushed, outlines of his teeth against Will’s collarbone and shoulders and throat, bruises darkening against his face from the slap.

Cock still hard and leaking.

Hole red and stretched and quivering.

Mason laughs, the sound nasal and warm and turns to Hannibal. “If you won’t try it, I suppose I’d better,” he reasons, as though their conversation has been held over breakfast, rather than over a trembling, sobbing boy.

"I have not yet brought it to the floor," Hannibal responds, watching Mason entirely now, as though Will isn't still tugging gently at his straps, shaking so hard that the bed rattles a little with it. "I thought that you might enjoy the first taste of it, before it's passed among the grazers."

Mason's hair remains where his hand had held it as he claps his hands together. "You are so thoughtful, thank you Hannibal." He scoots on his knees back from Will, stumbling a little as he drops his feet to the floor and scoops up his pants. A quick hand to stuff himself back inside as he tugs them up, and he goes to the mirror, to watch himself finish dressing.

"Now Will," he calls over his shoulder. "You don't go anywhere. I'm just going to go have a little treat - you know, to relax - and I'll be back up in a little while. What was it - water. You wanted water. Hannibal, make sure it has water."

The cigarette is ashed against the tray, agreement in a quiet hum accompanying the restrained movement. Mason snaps his suspenders back against his shoulders, shrugging into his coat and yanking on his gloves. He plucks the cigarette from Hannibal on his way past, turns over the smoke with a flourish against his tongue, and puffs it all out at once with a grin.

"What would I do without you?" A gloved hand works its way back through Hannibal's hair, and a kiss is pressed to his brow. Childlike, giddy and pleased and excited, as he flings open the door and trots back down the stairs.

A demand is shouted in Turkish from the floor below, and the room upstairs becomes very still.

Will tries to catch his breath, eyes closing to allow his mind some peace from this situation. He doesn't try to struggle against the bonds, his hands are already numb from trying, fingers twitching gently as he pants.

He hears Hannibal only when the other rests his knee on the bed, he wonders if the man is truly so silent or if he had managed to distract himself away.

Now he swallows, eyes wide and wet, and sniffs gently. His trembling hasn’t much subsided, but after a moment Will sighs softly and raises his chin in submission - willing, this one,

where the other had been demanded.

Hannibal makes a considering noise, offering the boy a drag from the cigarette, pressed lightly to his lips, and withdrawn again. Careful fingers catch Will's jaw and turn his head from side to side, a clinical movement betrayed only by the stroke of his thumb against the boy's cheek.

He sits, a leg tucked beneath him, on the edge of the bed and does not pretend he is not watching every breath that shudders through the boy's frame.

"Why are you here?" A low rumble in warm French, layered over with accents. "You are clever and well-positioned in society enough that you need not be, which means it is a choice." The cigarette is ashed to the floor, and the flutters of grey ground in beneath Hannibal's shoe. He glances towards Will's cock, flushed and swollen and leaking clear against the soft hairs of his belly. "You enjoy it."

Will swallows, directs his eyes away before licking his lips and parting them again, seeking another pull from the cigarette, which is granted. Hannibal's thumb catches his lip this time, tugs it down. Will exhales through his nose before humming the affirmative.

"To a point," Will amends, licking his lips to bite against them. "He is a very selfish lover." The tone is noted, resentful and mocking and amused as it is, and Hannibal smiles, eyes hooded as he draws his hand, the filter of the cigarette, down Will's body, far enough to just skim the skin, to tickle.

"Greed is the least of his sins," Hannibal responds, fingertips just teasing the sweet little curls of hair between the boy's legs before he withdraws his hand to smoke again, legs crossing comfortably. "Not that any just or righteous God concerned with such things would allow him to breathe another moment. I hope your prayers were that he does not. Perhaps a pipe will find its way down his throat."

The threats are amicably spoken, and Hannibal drops his cigarette into the muddle of ash beside the bed, a deliberate mess left for one who claims to despise it. He presses his hands on either side beside Will's head and leans over him, not yet touching, but drawing a breath just alongside of him.

"You have not yet answered my question, dear boy. Why are you here?"

Will draws back on reflex, as far into the pillows as he can, finds that, predictably, Hannibal follows, tilts his head to just skirt Will's skin with his lips. It sends a shiver through him, it's intoxicating. Will moans softly, bites his lip and lets his eyes close, fingers clenching in the restraints.

"I wanted to see what would happen if I stayed," he admits, voice quiet, gentle, as lovers would speak, and that too sends something thrilling through him and Will arches his hips up against the frictionless air.

"Curiosity has killed much more than cats, Will."

Hannibal's mouth is so soft that the way Will's skin aches beneath it is nearly painful. He strains at his bonds just a little, driven towards this warmth - this tenderness - and shivers gasping soft when Hannibal's hand slides through his hair to ease him back to the bed. Kisses trace along his collarbone, across his neck, and down to his chest, fair and lean and lovely.

"I share your interest, however," Hannibal adds, "in particular persons of interest. A desire to push and to prod and to press and see where the false walls fall away and the real ones lie." A broad hand, large and warm, presses against Will's hip and then curls around it as he tucks a kiss beneath Will's jaw. "I too wish to see what happens."

Will moans, a soft thing so unlike the strained sounds from before, sighs, feels himself tremble again before he swallows.

“Untie me?”

“No.”

Will laughs, licks his lips again, forces his eyes open and up. He is being *caressed*, not just touched, it’s unusual, far from unwelcome, and he tries to arch up again, strains with the effort to as Hannibal denies him anything more than what he will give him in his own time.

He turns his hand, slides it against Will’s thighs and something clicks, something through the thick mist of pleasure in Will’s mind and he struggles, just briefly, before Hannibal leans just a little closer and pushes him down into submission with a look.

“Stop,” Will breathes. “Don’t.”

A brow lifts in response and Will’s eyes flick to the door before returning. The door is open, still, the din of noise from below filtering up the stairs.

“Whose ass is he going to take this out on if you do, huh? Not fucking yours,” Will hisses, eyes to the door again. “I’m asking you. Please. Don’t.”

Hannibal pays it little mind.

"Do not swear at me," he warns, and there is a sharper edge in this murmur than all the dull blades of Mason's well-worn knives. "It makes you sound low-class and I cannot abide it. I spent enough time among the crude as it is."

He does not raise a hand, however, instead closing his eyes with a pleased noise as he lowers himself down the bed to kiss the inside of Will's thigh. Mouth spreading soft, a press of tongue, a tease of teeth there, across the pale skin before he draws his cheek alongside Will's cock. Chin on his belly, he reaches to tease his fingers against Will's mouth, seeking for him to suck them.

"Tell me, Will," purrs Hannibal, "did you enjoy the orange? He did give it to you, despite his protestations."

Will makes a helpless weak little sound, turns his head away from the fingers, finds them gentle in deliberately turning his chin back. He sighs, rubs his lips gently against the tips,

whispering his answer against them.

“It was delicious,” he admits, allowing the tip of his tongue to touch the fingers now, settling deeper into the bed to draw his knees up as much as the restraints allow - not much at all.

When he sucks in the two fingers finally it’s slow, tongue curled and bent lightly around them. He can’t distract himself from the feeling of the man lying as he is, so close, so deliberate and welcome. His cock twitches with the need for more, for Hannibal to turn his head and suck and let the consequences not matter.

His own imagination nearly tips him, and Will parts his lips on a moan as Hannibal slips his hand free, paints Will’s bottom lip with spit.

“Please, please don’t,” Will whispers again, but even he doesn’t believe his words.

Hannibal's fingers twist warmly through Will's curls, the dampened ones finding their way back to his thighs, furrowed with old scratches from where Mason dug his nails. There, as he brushes so near his opening, Hannibal hesitates with a distasteful expression, sharp and sudden as though passing something long-dead in the street, and he unloops his fingers from Will's hair to tug free a leather strap from Will"s wrist. Hannibal's expression bears in it some black amusement while at the same time entirely serious.

"Do not look so relieved. It will be tied again in moments. But there is a pressing matter with which I require your immediate assistance."

Leaning nearer, enough that he can frame Will's cheek with his hand, Hannibal turns his nose against the boy's temple and kisses there, softly, before he whispers, "Use your hand to clean the mess between your legs. How you dispose of it, I have little care, but I will not touch it."

Will twists away in disbelief, eyes wide and lips parted. "You're not serious." He knows it’s hollow, useless to argue, and swallows when Hannibal turns him back to how he held him before.

"I am very serious. And you will do it." A laugh then, pleased, low. “Because I am Mason's friend, and you will listen to me as you do him."

His voice takes on an amused tilt, reminiscent of Mason’s drawling tone, and Will shivers. He knows Hannibal could care less what Mason said, what Mason *says*. This is entirely his game to control, and Will entirely at his mercy.

Will swallows, risks carefully turning his head to brush his lips to Hannibal’s cheek too, before moving his hand to obey.

It's humiliating, more so than being watched had been. Will has no care, for the moment, either for where the mess goes and he wipes his hand away from where either of them will reach, and he keeps his eyes closed, his lips parted as the movements of his fingers send sparks of pleasure up his spine.

When he’s finished, he bites his lip, swallows. Says nothing. Waits.

What is possessing him, with this man, his wordless silence and menace and possessiveness of something he had only laid eyes on that morning, to obey so utterly, Will cannot be sure.

But he is.

"You listen very well," Hannibal intones. He brings a kiss to just the corner of Will's mouth, nearly touches, and then sits back slowly. Fingers lifted almost elegantly, Will's spit still damp upon them, Hannibal curls his tongue around and brings them between his lips. Sucking them, wetting them, tasting Will there, he exhales a long breath and leans again over the bound boy.

Fingertips cool against the heat of Will's flushed, abused opening, Hannibal circles gently, a tenderness and a cruelty in the act all at once. The gasp it draws curves his lips a little, and he leans near to press a kiss to the boy's twitching stomach.

"You are also a fool. You think yourself very clever, little lamb, and perhaps you are. But you have wandered into the domain of lions with insatiable and savage hungers."

Slowly, Hannibal introduces a finger, feeling the boy shudder and arch around him.

"I am no better than he, some might say," Hannibal considers, teeth teasing Will's belly as he slowly twists another finger inside of his aching hole. "I would very strongly disagree, of course, but it matters not to the lamb, who has found your way between us."

Hannibal's body arches forward and his fingers push deeper, not cruel but expectant, and he ducks his head against Will's temple, turning his head aside and mouthing warm against his cheek.

"To whom will you go, Will? To whose claws will you come for protection, knowing they are sharp enough still to rend you into pieces?"

Will says nothing, parts his lips on more soft noises of need, of want, as Hannibal continues teasing him, slow slide and gentle stretch as opposed to the violence before. He brings a hand up to cover his mouth and whines helplessly when Hannibal gently, deliberately takes it away.

"Beautiful boy, he will not let you go, now, since you've been so obedient for him. It is… disadvantageous," Hannibal continues, softly, curling his fingers until Will jerks, arches, twists, tries to use his free hand to make him slow down or stop, pressing against his chest in a weak attempt at defense.

"And you?" Will gasps, squirming, lips tilting in a smile despite himself as Hannibal patiently works him closer and closer to orgasm.

Hannibal just hums, ducks his head to press his teeth over a mark already on Will's skin, but he doesn't bite harder, merely holds, as though he himself had made it. A mirroring, an echo.

"I do not enjoy things I can easily acquire," he says again, "so I shall enjoy you very much."

Will trembles, body racing with shivers and warmth. There is a creak at the bottom of the stairs and his eyes shoot open, head turned to the door, heart hammering in a panic.

“Hannibal -”

Fingers twist, Will nearly sobs with it as Hannibal presses his lips to his temple again.

“Hannibal, please you have to stop -”

More sounds, to Will they sound like someone slowly climbing the stairs, his mind panicked, amplifying all sounds while at the same time making him feel entirely stifled.

“Please, please, I can’t… I can’t, he’ll skin me alive.”

Hannibal hums, considering.

“Bright boy,” yet no mercy, “You know what he is. You know that he is inhuman, mechanical, a gleaming statue of his own ego. Every creature wants to live.”

Another step and Will shudders, toes curling.

“Every creature has an innate need to survive.”

Will’s eyes are closed tight, lips parted and wet, pleas now coming silent as he uses every single ounce of willpower not to cum.

A heavy lean against the wall and suddenly the fingers are gone, Hannibal’s breath against Will’s ear. “I suppose then that it is my claws that you will bare yourself to, my clever boy.” A kiss then, hot, just as quick as any of Mason’s passing whims but filled with so much Will can barely breathe.

“You will pay for this mercy on your knees,” Hannibal promises, before twisting Wills hand to how it had been and swiftly retying the knot holding him secure.

Will knows better than to beg - knows that Hannibal, especially, can't free him from here, and may not still even were he able. He swallows hard and stretches his fingers towards Hannibal's own, only grazing them as the accusation snaps into the room.

"Hannibal."

The older man turns, with little movement beyond a slow swivel of his head, straightening slowly with a run of fingers down his embroidered waistcoat.

"Hannibal," drones Mason. He extends every syllable with every step, until he's crossed the room and come toe to toe with him beside the bed. A precautionary measure, perhaps, should the gentle swaying in his body become more, and he wraps his fingers in the fine, expensive material of Hannibal's vest. "You. What are you doing with my puppy?"

Hannibal's hand seems almost too large against Mason's cheek, fingers spread to overwhelm him and pull a laugh from the boy at the warm and unexpected touch. Calculated.

"Merely adjusting his straps," Hannibal assures Mason, and brings his hand down across Mason's face, broad hand and elegant fingers lingering long over his eyes and mouth, to finally brace softly against his neck instead. The touch has a peculiar effect, from one who so readily resists touch that isn't controlled by him, with every gesture that comes near him. Beneath it, Mason shivers, seems to nearly soften, as if caught by a chill he can't control. Contemplative, humming softly, Hannibal works his fingers up again and into Mason's hair, twisting and tugging it just gently.

Mason moans, a soft and alarmingly human sound - as though perhaps, somewhere buried deep, any of that remains inside of him - and rests his forehead against Hannibal's chest.

"Have you enjoyed yourself, Mason?" asks the older man, hand splaying down the boy's back to earn another shiver. A weak and childish nod, a huff of laughter, is his only response and Hannibal tilts his head to look down at him.

"Bed," Hannibal decides, nevermind that it's already occupied. Mason remains pliant, eyes nearly closed as Hannibal peels free his layers of clothing. Though his touch remains gentle, there is no warmth in his eyes - it is a perfunctory act, as though removing clothing from a patient in need of obligatory attention, and each article of clothing is laid neatly beside the bed as Mason slumps across Will and drapes pale limbs over him.

Only when Mason has settled, lips parted into a drowsy contentment somewhere between an opiate stupor and sleep itself, does Hannibal drag a hand through Will's hair, the tension softening just a little from the corners of his eyes before they lift in amusement and he turns to gather his coat.

"You should have let me finish you off after all," Hannibal observes with a note of pleasure, and he lets the door slide closed behind him.

Puppy

Chapter Summary

> "*Some dogs are very large, furry things, big warm blankets with feet. Some dogs are quite small. Some have ears that stand up. Some have ears that lay down.”*
>
> *He snatches the gift from Will’s hands to hold it in his own.*
>
> *“Some dogs have tails, and some don’t.”*
>
> *At one end is a carved wooden plug, polished smooth, and just large enough to fit comfortably in Mason’s leather-clad palm. Attached to the less rounded end of it, a tail, bronzed brown that catches copper red in the light, with a white tip towards the end.*
>
> *“You,” Mason declares, “are one with a tail."*

Chapter Notes

> I...
>
> We are both to ~~thank~~ blame for this. We have no idea how it happened but... have 12k of puppyplay.

“Papa always made sure to emphasize aesthetics.”

Hannibal hears the man before he sees him, raising his head from where he has settled into a couch. Attention focused on the boy splayed in front of him, he arches a brow as Will pulls the pipe from his own lips, blinking languid at Hannibal in return.

“You can look at the register for an animal. The history, you know, the *lineage* of them. The *breeding*. And all of that matters - it’s very important, really - but if the animal itself is a horror then the provenance of it scarcely matters at all.”

He is in a rare form, having gone for an increasingly unusual walk through the neighborhood with one of the Turks who suffices as protection, and now apparently inspired by the thing. A package tucked against his chest beneath his other arm, he sweeps towards the couch where Will raises his eyes to meet this ghostly figure, entirely white and entirely unnatural, from the glimmer in his eyes to the grin that splits his lips wide.

“Even deformed, monstrous creatures can come from good breeding,” Mason advises as he settles onto the back of the couch. Hannibal watches, placid, as Mason pats the younger boy’s cheek a little roughly, gloves still cold from the snow outside. “Aesthetics *matter*, Will. And while you are - ha, really - quite striking already, I like my dogs to have a bit of show in them. A bit of *flare*.”

His tone stiffens, teeth bared in what he must think to be a grin. “Upstairs.”

Will swallows. He knows that tone too well, now. Hardened against it already by the few weeks he has scraped by living here - if living was a word he would attribute to his current situation. He doesn’t let his eyes slip to Hannibal, whom he had been slowly teasing closer with languid limbs and vocal little sighs just moments before, and slowly sits up to rest his chin against Mason’s hand.

Then, without a word more, he stands and slinks his way upstairs, hips swaying as much by design as by the drug’s taking of his balance. He swings himself around the bannister and onto the stairs, that he takes slowly, one by one, to the top floor he has come to know as the room he sleeps in.

He doesn’t usually allow himself to think much on what else goes on in there, nightly, sometimes twice daily, sometimes more still.

Depending on how cruel Mason is feeling.

Depending on how long Mason is gone and how cruel Hannibal is feeling.

Will bites his lip, shudders in pleasure thinking of the older man downstairs.

Once in the room he sighs, stretches his arms up over his head, shirt riding up where he had not bothered to tuck it in in the first place that morning. When he turns, though, he finds Mason already there, nearly chest to chest with him, and Will presses his lip between his teeth a little tighter and lets out a little laugh, eyes blue, widened by the drug, and turned up towards his master.

Mason leans into the boy, enough to move him, to force Will to take a step to support them both, and kisses him soundly. It would be sweet, from anyone else, an eager, pleased thing full of soft sounds and a tender touch against Will’s cheek.

From anyone who didn’t taste raw with the bitterness of countless drugs, whose fingers weren’t shielded from actual contact by black leather gloves.

But for them, it’s close enough, and Mason grins against Will’s mouth. A far more alarming mood than when Mason finds Will and he’s already seething, those moments at least predictable enough for the fists and teeth and strikes that follow. It’s when he endeavors to seem human, seeks out affection - as if Mason could feel any part of it - that he is most unpredictable.

“I bought a present for you. Isn’t that nice? Because you’ve been so well-behaved, sweet boy, and I was feeling generous.” He presses his fingers across Will’s mouth, and over his face,

into his hair. “I would want you to thank me, but there’s only so much improvement one can really expect.”

He thrusts the package towards Will’s chest, chasing his mouth for another kiss - this time with teeth, to snare the younger boy’s lips just briefly. Cool fingertips graze along Will’s bare belly, remaining dangerously near him, stark attention focused on Will’s reaction rather than the gift itself.

Will makes a soft sound and sucks his lip back into his mouth, catching his breath with the bare rise and fall of his chest. The package feels unusual, no shape that he can blindly recognize, and heavy enough to know there is something more significant there than clothes, perhaps, or an odd object for Will to set aside as his only possession in the den that is exclusive.

“Thank you,” he whispers, unsure how else he will be asked to show his gratitude, but fairly sure that his skin will be red from it once he’s done.

He ducks his head to work fingers against the rough rope holding it bound, careful with it, thoughtlessly draping it around his neck to have it out of the way and not on the floor, before allowing himself to pick apart the paper so carefully folded around it.

What he finds when he sees it is just as inexplicable as it had been when he had merely felt it, and Will brings his eyes up to Mason’s, swallowing and parting his lips in a pouting, childish way he’s found sends that shiver down Mason’s spine.

“What is it?”

“Sweet boy,” Mason declares, loud enough to startle him, but with another eerily gentle touch along Will’s flushed cheek. “Don’t look so down. You remember what I was saying earlier?”

For once, alarmingly, Mason does not immediately answer his own question, instead searching for it in Will’s eyes from over the top of his glasses from so near that Will has to draw back, just a little, to take in the whole of his expression.

Manic. Delighted. Bright with anticipation that blooms florid across his grin.

“Aesthetics,” Will breathes, and the word turns into an enormous sigh of relief as Mason kisses him again.

“Yes, precisely that. Aesthetics. Some dogs are very large, furry things, big warm blankets with feet. Some dogs are quite small. Some have ears that stand up. Some have ears that lay down.”

He snatches the gift from Will’s hands to hold it in his own.

“Some dogs have tails, and some don’t.”

At one end is a carved wooden plug, polished smooth, and just large enough to fit comfortably in Mason’s leather-clad palm. Attached to the less rounded end of it, a tail, bronzed brown that catches copper red in the light, with a white tip towards the end.

“You,” Mason declares, “are one with a tail, that must have been very cruelly removed before I could get you into my safekeeping. I’d have done the docking myself but someone beat me to the punch. So, since someone took your tail away, I will give you one back.”

It is, ostensibly, as he said, a show of generosity, but there is an obscene delight in how closely he watches Will’s reaction, holding it near to him again.

“You should take your clothes off. It’ll make this easier than if I have to do it.”

Will’s eyes are wide, and for a moment he wonders if he’s hallucinating. He knows that with the amount he had smoked, had been allowed to indulge in today, he could easily be. But it’s too real, too worrisome to be a trip.

He tugs absently at the rope around his neck, pressing it down against his skin as his eyes grow vacant before he blinks and returns himself to the present. To Mason, whose grin is just as wide, just as manic, now with an edge of impatience to it that Will does not want to sharpen.

He makes a soft, humming sound and pushes up on his toes before setting back to his heels again.

“You got me a tail,” he repeats, feeling himself almost tremble with the words being spoken aloud, making them real. It’s both hysterically funny and terrifyingly disturbing, and he settles on matching Mason’s grin before he lets the rope go loose against his shoulders and slips his hands down to his pants to undo them, cheeks warm already under the scrutiny of the man before him, lips parting as he feels Mason’s fingers in his hair almost like a caress that borders just barely on painful.

Will folds his pants, for want of distraction, before returning to stand in front of Mason.

This, at least, he has grown used to, this deliberate show of nudity for the man to almost inspect him. He wonders, not for the first time, where Mason had come from and what his business had been before this.

Will grazes his knuckles down the top of his thigh in a seemingly absent motion before splaying his hand against it.

Mason shrugs out of his coat, tossing it atop Will’s pants and reaching to work loose the buttons of the boy’s shirt, his gift tucked neatly under his arm. “It will look very fetching,” Mason informs him, forcing eye contact with the shift of his head, holding Will’s attention on him as he pushes the boy’s shirt back off his skinny shoulders. “I had it made, specifically, for *you*, Will. I would hate to have spent all that money for you to not use it. I would hate to think that you’re not *enjoying* it.”

He curls the tail around Will’s neck, letting it drape soft against his pale chest. The smooth wooden plug - just a little too large to be comfortable for Will’s mouth - is brought to his lips and pressed against them.

“You do *like* it, don’t you? Aren’t you a grateful, good boy since Mason gave you such a nice home to sleep in?”

Will watches him, knows he can’t refuse if he wants to keep his teeth, if he wants to keep himself at least somewhat intact. He turns his head to mouth against it, eyes on Mason properly, smile just gracing his lips.

“Very much,” he settles on, letting his tongue slick the tapered end of it before finally allowing it to be pushed deeper in.

It’s unusual, smooth and just slightly hinting at the taste of polish. It is unyielding, unlike the few other things Will has had forced into his mouth before, and he has to adjust his breathing, his swallowing, to not choke quickly. He can’t give this object pleasure to make it stop.

His eyes don’t leave Mason’s, and carefully, slowly, he wraps his fingers just between where Mason’s are to hold the thing on his own. He finds the undivided attention sends his skin singing with a bare flush, his nerves humming with an acute awareness of being *wanted*, for a change.

Will makes a sweet little noise and parts his lips to show how far the plug has been pushed in, how he has spread his tongue to accommodate.

“Good boy,” Mason grins, reaching up to ruffle Will’s hair, leaving his fingers in it as he watches from mere inches away as Will whimpers a little, open-mouthed, around the smooth wood. He doesn’t snatch it back from Will’s grasp as he normally might, to force it into his mouth and hear him choke. Instead, he seems pleased - truly, really - by Will’s performance with it, the sight of him feeding it to himself in savored inches.

Even still, for all his delight, the older boy does not appear to be particularly aroused at the moment, in any physical sense. This too is a curious thing, perhaps a result of the copious drugs in his system at any given time, or of the exhaustion with which he runs himself ragged between Will and the orphans and actually doing work. Many times, he seems to find just as much pleasure in forcing others to act on his behalf, than in taking part in any of the activities himself, directly.

It doesn’t stop him from sliding a gloved hand down the flat of Will’s belly into his breeches and wrapping firmly around the younger boy’s cock to tug it in time with the movement of the wooden plug past his lips.

“On your knees,” Mason sighs against Will’s ear, removing his hand after a few quick strokes to stir him, and bringing a fingertip to his mouth to taste the boy’s precum from it. “Puppies aren’t supposed to jump up,” he adds, and in this, a warning, however softened by the eagerness mood.

Will gasps quietly, lips parting to allow the plug to drop from them, hand still holding it secure so it can’t clatter to the floor. For a moment longer he watches, brings a hand to the last covering he wears before he notes the bare narrowing in Mason’s eyes and sinks to his knees. He settles back against his heels, toes pressing into the wood to arch his foot in a pleasingly vulnerable way.

“You know that suits you,” Mason tells him, head tilting to the side as he regards the boy at his feet. “Obedience.”

He considers the boy in silence a moment longer before gesturing for him to turn around.

“All fours, like a good dog,” he says, taking the tail from him with a swish against the curve of Will’s spine as he obeys this, too. For a while, there is silence, before there is a sound of fabric folding as Mason lowers himself to crouch behind Will, deliberately where he won’t see him in his peripheral, deliberately there long enough for Will to tremble before he feels a warm palm against his thighs.

“Bend,” a soft, breathless instruction that Will swallows, but lowers to his elbows. “Further.”

Will lets out a slow breath and obeys this too, slipping to rest his chest against the floor, hissing from the cold there. Mason draws in a breath and holds it, and Will feels himself flush in a strange sort of *pride* at having drawn such a response.

Gloves slide over the soft fabric covering him and gently ease it down, a deliberate baring that sends Will shivering and tightens the grip on his thighs as his knees are lifted from on top the fabric and it’s tossed aside.

“Spread.”

Will does, arching his back deliberately just to draw a sound from Mason.

“Wider, puppy.”

An Will nearly whines, feeling the damp tip of the plug skim the insides of his thighs.

Another shiver of sound from behind Will, enjoying the sight of the younger boy so readily bared for him. He does like to force them - to teach them how to behave properly - but there’s a thrill for now in not *having* to do so. In saying down, and watching the boy go this knees. In telling him to bend, and watching him bow across the cold floor.

“You’re so well-behaved today,” Mason responds, a mild surprise. “Who taught you so well, hmm?”

He laughs loudly and when he does, Will can feel the warmth of his breath, so near to his skin, the only warning Will receives before Mason swipes his tongue across the boy’s hole. It is bruised, visibly, made more obvious by the reflection of light in the slick trail that Mason leaves across him. The previous nights’ adventures in seeing how many of Mason’s fingers Will could take inside of him have left the normally pink and pale skin darkened, and the sight alone makes Mason grin.

“I asked a question,” he intones again, and as Will draws breath to answer Mason closes his lips against the sensitive skin to suck roughly, pushing the boy to sprawl further across the floor, working into him with his tongue.

Will makes a sound that isn’t entirely in his voice, high and helpless and trembling at the end as his entire body slips from taut to languid in shifts and shivers he can’t control at all. The

feeling is unlike anything else he has ever felt and his face flushes red, his neck and chest as well as he scrabbles at the floor but, obediently, stays as he's been commanded to.

Pain had taught him obedience. The fear of retribution, the fear of the instructions themselves, but worried, more, about being tossed to the cold streets, entirely nude, of being given to anyone hungry enough to want him should he disobey.

He does not think of Hannibal.

"You did," Will whimpers, splaying himself further still against the floor, entirely vulnerable, entirely open, a wanton needy little thing as he rocks his hips slowly back against the hot tongue. "Mason -" A moan, loud and drawn, in a tone Will adjusts to the childish lisp he uses in times like these, when he knows Mason wants to hear it the most. "Mason, please…"

The older boy's shudder is felt, through the low sound that relieves itself of him, pressed against Will's skin. Mason twists his tongue deeper, lips spread against the boy. Grabbing him by the thighs, he leans into Will until the boy's cheek is pressed to the floor and Mason hears another high, delicious little whimper.

"Such a good puppy," Mason snarls softly, something of the predator stirring in him when those little pleas and lisps fill his ears. He can't resist it any more than he can resist the itch for violence or the tug of near-constant intoxication, the insatiable pull towards little things that need protection from men just like him.

He is unrelenting in the languid, open-mouthed kisses pressed against Will's tender hole, pushed against him nearly to the point of discomfort.

"Mason," begs Will again, fingers curled against the floorboards and head bowed low across his arms.

"Mason?" asks the older boy, pushing against Will to spread him wider still. "Mason what?"

"Please," gasps Will. "Please make me a good puppy." His back bends and he loses a little of the lovely lilt when Mason finally pulls free of him, to give him space to breathe, although as soon as the sensation parts, Will whimpers for it again.

And whimpers for what he knows is coming next.

It's not only wooden, pressed against his slick opening, but a heavy, dense rosewood - very expensive, and especially unyielding as Mason works the boy open in increments, the same way Will let it fill his mouth moments before. Even abused, aching sore - so much so that without the poppy to precede this Will isn't sure that he would be able to stand it without sobbing out in pain - it's enough of a sight to pull a low groan out of the older boy, reveling in watching Will's little hole begin to widen around the toy.

Pushing against one of Will's cheeks to hold him open, gloves warmed now by being held against Will's thighs, Mason reminds the boy with an arched brow, "It is a very nice gift."

Will gasps, digs the heels of his hands into the floor and whines when it widens to painful, when he reaches the widest girth of the plug before Mason pushes it just a little more and it tapers again, and Will whines in relief, shaking from the feeling, breathless with how full he feels, how unusual it is to have the soft tickle of the tail end against his thighs.

“Yes,” he agrees, curling his fingers against the wood, scraping it, before raising himself a little to look over his shoulder at himself.

Mason sits back, regarding the picture before him, the boy with a thick, soft tail now comfortably between his legs, it’s such a strange sight, yet entirely exquisite, a completed fantasy. He doesn’t chastise Will for moving without permission - he lets him look.

Every shift brings shivers up Will’s back, curls his shoulders, makes his knees weak. This is like nothing he has ever felt before, like nothing he could ever imagine feeling at all. He squeezes around it experimentally and finds his lips parted on a silent groan before his teeth click together and he shuts his mouth again.

“Where’s your leash, puppy?” Mason asks, eyes up to meet Will’s over the rims of his glasses, lifting a single finger to almost delicately stroke up the underside of Will’s cock, now intensely hard between his legs. Then he leans closer, enough for Will to press himself to the floor again, eyes up and wide, not fearful, but certainly wary.

Mason just grins.

“Fetch.”

Will isn’t sure if he has Hannibal to thank for this, but he no longer has to be tethered to the bed when he sleeps. The leather had left a raw ring around his neck, had healed quickly but stayed sensitive. Mason finds great pleasure in pressing his fingers harshly against it when he holds Will down.

Hannibal finds great pleasure in drawing his lips over it and sucking until Will trembles with the terror of him leaving a mark.

But as such, the leash now rests by the side of the bed, usually on the floor, by the bedside table Mason favors. Will doesn’t have to ask that he crawl to get it.

The first movement, a slow shift of one knee sliding across the floor, is enough to make him dizzy. Heavy inside of him, the plug moves almost in counterpoint to his hips, bearing steady pressure on that specific spot inside of him. By design, he imagines, no detail too small for Mason's cruel scrutiny when he's in the mood for it.

Footsteps click closer to Will across the floor as Mason comes to stand beside him, watching Will a single burst of laughter. "You know, I'd almost started to think of you as a person? This will make it much easier for me to keep things straight." A bare hand is pressed to the base of Will's spine, to arch his hips a little higher, and Mason strokes affectionately against the boy's flushed skin. "Go on then - bring me your leash, puppy."

It isn't far, and Will finds that in his languid crawl that if he shifts his hips with a little more emphasis, it has the benefit of allowing him to slightly control the weight of the tail, as well as pulling an approving hum out of Mason. The fox fur is soft, tickling his bare bruised thighs as he goes, and a ruddy color darkens across the bridge of his nose.

As with so many things, it might almost be pleasant, were he doing it for anyone else.

He does not think of Hannibal. A stretch allows him to grasp the leash - an actual leather leash and collar, black and oiled soft, rather than a strap of rein. The last gift Mason gave him, but with Hannibal's fingerprints all over it.

The man had told Will as much, pinning him to a couch when no one was around and rutting hard against him - he was asked to do it as a favor for Mason, and had spent a great deal of time imagining it against Will's pale throat.

Will swallows hard and tries to sit back on his heels with the lead in hand, but the pressure forces another moan from him and so he remains still leaning back, but with his hands on the floor.

Like a dog.

Mason grins savagely.

"Bring it to me," he instructs, and turns to walk back towards his desk as Will offers up the lead and collar.

Will bites his lip, fingers twisted through the leather in resistance to throwing it, or screaming, or moaning, or just rubbing himself furiously, cock standing hard and pink. "Mason -"

"Dogs," shouts Mason, and his voice eases just as quickly, "don't speak. They - they whine and whimper and bark and howl." He pauses, dropping back into his chair, and laughs. "No howling in the house, though, or you'll have to stay outside."

Will considers. Truly, he does.

But then Mason settles, and he has that genuinely pleased expression on his face and Will... obeys. A moment of hesitation, knowing he can't crawl with the thing in his hands, before Will sighs heavily and sets the leather between his teeth.

The crawl back is just as slow, leaves Will just as breathless, and by the time he reaches Mason again his entire body is shaking from sensation, face flushed and lips wet from where he had held the leather.

He sets it at Mason's feet without a sound and looks up.

He is surprised to find that he can read the praise on the man's face, without him having to say a word. Genuinely happy to have a puppy, not a boy, to abuse now.

And he had been so close to imagining Will human.

Mason shifts, then, a quick lean to gather the collar to clip it around Will's neck, to trail the leash between his fingers thoughtfully before he tugs, and Will arches up on his knees, hands up to support himself against Mason's thigh.

"Down," almost a growl, this, a warning tone. "Puppies do not jump up. I thought I had trained you better. Must I whip you to make you remember?" He sighs, even as Will near-instantly obeys and sets his hands against his own thighs, then slowly to the floor again, when he finds he can. His back is ramrod straight, afraid that if he moves too much the damned plug within him will rub more, send Will entirely over without his control.

Removing his glove, allowing now a closer contact than before, Mason reaches for the boy and rifles his fingers through Will's hair. He scratches softly through the curls, gentle and almost fond, petting his puppy with an unmistakable affection. He's always wanted a dog, but the ones he's had never lasted very long. After a time, they simply stopped wanting to learn - they would snap or bite or growl when he came near them, and that's when Mason knew it was time for them to go.

Not nearly as smart as this one, who tilts his head into the touch, drug still weighing down his skinny limbs and letting his eyes fall drowsily closed. Not as bright as this boy-puppy who obediently opens his mouth to lick Mason's fingers when he presses them against his lips. And not nearly as pretty, when he can enjoy the youthful florid color across Will's cheeks, the reflection of the gaslights against his pale skin, mottled with bruises in various states of healing, whose lovely mouth unfurls on a little whimper only for him.

They were bad dogs, and this one, Mason decides, in this moment, is very good dog indeed.

"Are you a happy puppy?"

The question comes suddenly and softly, less the rifle report of Mason's usual interjections - and everything he says, really, is an interjection - and more the whisper of a blade held in a well-trained hand. Will's eyes open again and he regards the boy only a few years older than himself, sucking softly against Mason's fingertips as he nods, as he must.

"I couldn't tell," Mason continues, still flushed with pleasure but always, always seeking more. "Happy puppies normally wag their tails. I think I'd like it if my happy puppy would wag for me."

He brings his spit-damp fingertips beneath Will's chin to lift the boy's eyes to his own, watching carefully.

Will swallows, feeling the blush over his face darken further. It is humiliating being brought to this level, but what can he do? What cam Will possibly do but obey and hope this whim passes? He arches his back, lifts his hips and shifts them, enough for the tail to twitch, move behind him counter to how his hips do, belatedly following the movement, and Mason claps his hands together once with a laugh.

"Unbelievable! This is - wow. Entirely delightful. Will, it seems you really did always have a tail before it was docked." He leans closer and Will makes a soft noise. "Say thank you. Thank you, Mason, for returning my tail to me."

Will's lips part before he remembers and he makes a little whining sound instead, looking up at Mason before opening his mouth to let his tongue loll free; doggish grin and doggish loyalty. It seems enough for Mason, who shakes his head with another laugh and leans back enough to holler down the stairs.

"Hannibal! Come look at this."

And here, Will entirely falters.

It is one thing to have Mason bring him to this, to degrade him so far, and quite another to have Hannibal see him. He jerks back, finds the leash tugged and held and Mason raising an eyebrow at him.

"Don't get skittish," he warns, and Will's eyes flick to the stair as heavy footsteps grow closer against them. "You know Hannibal."

Precisely why Will wants nothing to do with being a dog in front of him. He tenses, shifts so the man can't see his tail and flushes dark regardless when the man steps through the doorway.

It isn't an uncommon thing, to find Mason in his chair with a naked boy at his side, but Hannibal's attention lingers on Will no longer than any other boy before turning away, following the leash that holds Will bound in Mason's hand, and finally resting on the wild-haired, wild-eyed young man who keeps Will at attention, with leather around his fist.

"The collar suits him," Hannibal observes, as passive in tone and posture as he ever is when Mason is near. A far different man than the one who regularly catches Will in dark corners, meeting him in a savage kiss or an invasive press of fingers, uttering promises and warnings each in turn. A host to his own sort of mania, one far more dangerous in how readily it's restrained and hidden beneath a handsome and well-kept veneer.

Mason's grin is bright and boyish, a child with a new toy to lord over the others, and when he spins lightly to and fro in his chair it jerks Will from his carefully staid position on the floor, forcing him to rise a little each time, resisted with a small gasp as he tries to keep the tail pinned beneath himself.

"He's been a very well-behaved puppy," Mason agrees, glancing towards the boy at his side, blushing livid and wide-eyed with dread. "Good puppies get treats. Bad puppies get beaten until they're good puppies again. And tonight he's been very good, I haven't had to hit him even once."

A hum from Hannibal at this, a knowing glint in his eye as he glances towards Will and ambles slowly closer.

"And so he will receive a treat then," Hannibal asks, and Mason laughs.

"He already has, Hannibal, he already has." A quick snap on the leash jerks Will forward again. "Aren't you happy to see Hannibal? You should show him how happy you are."

Will makes a weak sound as he's forced forward on all fours again, and he can't hide the damned tail anymore and he knows, he *knows* that Hannibal's stillness is for no other reason. He resolutely does not look up, face hot with humiliation, hands curled tight against the floor before there's another word from Mason, and Will obeys that cruel order too and shifts his hips again.

Mason laughs, delighted and perhaps even genuinely happy to see Will so obedient, and Will stops as soon as he feels it safe to and shifts the necessary distance to be able to sit again and hide the thing.

He hisses, sitting too hard, and moans softly as it sends shivers through him again, as it makes him want to do nothing more than rub himself to completion before he removes the blasted thing and can curl up in a ball somewhere dark where he never has to see either of them again.

He should be so lucky.

And it's all Hannibal can do not to allow his delight to show through as obvious as Mason's might be, and to allow it only to gather in the corners of his eyes.

"He's very well-trained to your hand, Mason," Hannibal admits. He doesn't move to the chair across from Mason's seat, where Will might be able to sit outside of his night-dark gaze, but instead settles against the edge of the desk, close enough that he could reach out and pet Will, if he felt like doing so.

He knows, much more than Mason, how particularly clever this puppy really is. Well-raised but pulled up by his own bootstraps into a higher education, into the classical languages and studies of humanity that allowed him to recite Greek philosophy as Hannibal fingered him roughly against a wall not a week before. Beyond that, even, the boy is quick, the kind of sharp-minded common sense born of self-preservation and a stalwart need to survive.

It's done him well, in truth. He's already survived Mason's relentless attention far longer than most of the boys that have drawn it, and charmed the unhinged older boy at the same time. And it's made him a far more tempting object of Hannibal's particular interests for it.

"He appears to still be a little naughty," Hannibal observes, lighting a cigarette from Mason's case on the desk. He nods towards Will, eyes falling across the boy's hardness that would have fallen away from humiliation alone if not for the hated plug that sends rivets of pleasure up his spine every time he moves.

Mason gasps a little, animated and delighted by the observation, as Hannibal knew he would be. The older man doesn't bother to suppress a slight smile as Mason winds the leash around his fist enough to bring Will up onto his knees, to force his hands out onto Mason's legs for balance.

"Hannibal is right! You are *very* naughty, but you've been so good," Mason chimes, fingers cold where they settle against Will's cheek. "Does puppy need to relieve himself? Puppies deserve fun too, sometimes."

It's almost too much for Hannibal, now, some profound level of embarrassment on behalf of another and his own perverse joy in Will's despisement of being laid out this way in front of him, when Mason slinks back into his chair and extends his leg.

The meaning is exceedingly clear.

Will swallows, ducks his head and shakes it. Surely he didn't do anything particularly more wrong than usual to deserve this level of cruelty. He doesn't look at Hannibal, he refuses, though the man is close enough to touch, close enough for Will to harm in revenge, had he something to do so with beyond his hands and teeth. With a whine he raises his chin when the leash is tugged enough not to give him a choice.

"Puppy." It's expectant, coaxing, and Will shivers again, another quick shake of his head, a long, pained whine when his air is cut off for his trouble. Mason watches him carefully a moment before leaning down, almost nose to nose with the boy.

"There are two ways this ends, dog," he tells him, disturbingly calm, disturbingly lucid. "Either you continue being a good dog, you listen to your master and you *obey*."

Will's hands grip harder against Mason's thighs.

"Or you don't get off again. And I beat you into obedience again with the tail still in."

Will's lips part and his brows rise and he makes a sound close to a word, the only word he can manage that he thinks will be *allowed* without retribution, before he soothes his hands against Mason's legs, a silent acceptance. The leash loosens.

Will moves to rub his head against Mason's thigh, a rough sort of nuzzle, before he obediently straddles Mason's leg and closes his eyes tight before rocking his hips forward against the rough fabric.

The sound of Will's rubbing against the material, the soft susurrus of friction, fills the silence of the room. An instant that feels much longer with so much attention on the boy, as he tightens his fingers against Mason's thigh, and rocks himself again.

Mason's laugh, low and unsettling, breaks the stillness, and he drops a hand to Will's hair to pet him.

"Naughty puppy."

It is, to Mason's credit, one of the more spectacular forms of humiliation that Hannibal has seen him inflict. Not an outright brutality, broken bones and splintered teeth and blood, and not the strange sexual perversions that grip him and bring horrors spewing from his lips, but a creativity far more calculated than the drive of his own ill-tempered mind and body. A humiliation, profound, that almost embarrasses Hannibal into looking away on Will's behalf.

Almost.

If the boy weren't so simply charming in his submission.

There is a glance exchanged between Hannibal and Mason, permission asked and yielded, and Hannibal leans - cigarette between his teeth to give reason to the grin that threatens to bare itself there - to trail his fingers along the small of Will's back. Down his spine to where his tail rests, fluffy, between his legs. Hannibal lifts it a little, runs it through his grip, and tugs just a little to tease.

Will makes a helpless noise and shudders, pressing back against Hannibal's hand - that mercilessly strokes against him and sends Will's mind into a tailspin - before bucking forward against Mason's leg again.

Caught between two men he can't predict, he can't control, and who show very little mercy to him, though both seem entirely obsessed with owning him in their own way.

He ruts faster, enough to genuinely feel good now, despite the bright flush against his nose and cheeks, soft sounds turning to louder ones as Hannibal twists the plug, as he pushes it just barely further in.

"Please, it hurts," Will gasps, though his thighs spread wider still, though his back arches in undeniable need to seek more. He doesn't want this. Not this level of it.

Beatings would do him less harm.

He sobs, so close already, leaving damp patches against Mason's pants, ducks his head to hide.

There's a beauty to the debasement of such a brilliant boy, to watch his spine curl with every thrust against Mason's leg, the shifting of the tail in little motions as he works himself nearer completion even against his own will or desire. Hannibal wonders if Mason realizes the real rarity of someone like this, and reminds himself that Mason does not consider Will to be a *someone* at all, but rather a *something* for him to play with until he's bored or breaks it entirely.

And there are many more beautiful ways to break a boy like this than the pedestrian punishments Mason usually administers, this particularly artistic flight of fancy aside.

"You're being a very good boy," intones Hannibal softly, a scarce twist to tug the tail out a little again, and work it back inside. He speaks English now, rather than the French he usually growls into Will's ear when he's got the boy beneath him, not wishing to raise Mason's ire more than he's already risking.

The older boy seems to approve however, grinning a little as his chair squeaks under the movement of Will's body against him. "It's not nice to pull puppy's tails," Mason utters brightly from behind his hand, as though to conceal his delight at Will's eager rocking against his leg. "But this one seems to like it."

"Don't," Will whines, working himself harder now, closer, hoping that once he's spent he'll at least be saved the embarrassment of more of this - he knows Mason's moods well enough now to understand they last only as long as he's interested. This is his game now, and once the game ends he will discard Will until the evening when his darker moods are liable to hit.

Or until Hannibal finds Will somewhere and pins him to torment again.

The thought alone sends Will bucking harder, deliberate rolling of his hips, arched back, and then he cums, hot and darkening the fabric of Mason's pants with it, quiet whimpers as he keeps rubbing until he just stops, too sore to keep going, entire body shaking with how *good* the plug feels despite how spent and sensitive he is.

"Please can I go?" Will whispers, French barely coherent, he knows he won't get an answer.

Stubbing out the remains of his cigarette, Hannibal exhales his smoke towards the ceiling and moves to stand, as dispassionate as he was before, as though Will weren't trembling and sticky on the floor at Mason's feet, head bowed against his leg.

"Thank you for inviting me, Mason," murmurs Hannibal, and there is a genuine pleasure in his words. "He answers to a strong hand. Particularly well-trained to obey the voice that commands him."

Mason ruffles at the compliment taken gladly for himself, beaming at Hannibal as though having accomplished something particularly productive. His attention is drawn to the dampness soaking against his leg, however, and the smile falters a little, a quickening displeasure.

"You've made a mess, haven't you?" he scolds, as though the result were somehow unexpected. "I want you to li-"

"Leave him to it," suggests Hannibal, in a cheery sort of tone. "You've trained him well enough to know. They've prepared a pipe for you downstairs, if you'd prefer that to watching your puppy revel in his filth."

There is a moment where Mason's eyes narrow, incrementally, towards Hannibal before he stands and drops the leash to the floor. Hannibal bites back a request to oversee the boy, though sorely tempted, and instead watches Mason and Mason alone. "Perhaps he could wait for you. A charming sight, once you've enjoyed your evening, to return to see a puppy curled at the foot of your bed."

Another long look, another consideration, before Mason sits forward, sets a palm against Will's chest and pushes him back to sit, drawing his knuckles almost gentle under his chin to lift it.

"Stay," he tells him. patting him on the cheek twice in a way that makes Will flinch in fear of it becoming a slap, but it never does. Then Mason stands, steps over the boy to go to his wardrobe and pull the doors open dramatically to seek out a clean pair of pants.

"You know, I don't even know what to do with him," he admits, as though Will isn't even there, listlessly tugging against his own leash as he adjusts his position to sit so the plug doesn't fully torment him. "What does one do with pets when they're not using them?"

Hannibal hums, turns his eyes to Will who deliberately ignores him, setting his jaw into a tight displeasure.

“Some allow them to roam,” Hannibal responds, turning back, watching uninterested as Mason redresses himself and tosses the dirtied pants to the floor. “Others keep them caged. Though those animals tend to grow aggressive, I wouldn’t recommend it.”

Mason shrugs, draws a hand through his hair and gives Hannibal an oddly genuine smile.

“My dogs never lived long enough for me to consider much about them at all.” A hum and he walks back, pressing a hand to Hannibal’s chest as he passes him, this time, leaning up. “Just keep him upstairs. He’s gorged himself on the pipes already, he needs some down time. I need him coherent for the evening.”

And with that, he leaves, feet falling quick on the stairs and then slow again on the floor. Will tracks him to the center of the den before he shifts, turns to try and work the thing from himself, turning with wide, angry eyes to Hannibal when the other steps closer.

“Do not. Just… fucking do not, Hannibal.”

He’s trembling, despite the strong words, and whines when he finds the plug as difficult to remove as it was to push in. Hannibal blinks at this, a feigned surprise, as false as the look he casts to either side of himself as if unsure to whom Will is addressing his ire. His chin catches a particular, curious tilt as he watches Will bend further forward to try and work the toy free of himself, halting again when he hits the swell of it and has to shutter a moan behind his teeth.

"Don't - what, Will?" he says softly, a gentle roll of French across his tongue. He closes the door as he passes by, locking it as insurance, with a confidence that Mason will be several hours away in a flower-fueled haze across his private couch downstairs.

"Don't send him down to smoke himself into a stupor?" Hannibal's fingers trail the edge of Mason's desk as he nears, all long legs and an elegance far above his station in this place. "Don't insist that he leave you be, rather than force your mouth against the mess you made on his leg?"

He stands, looming over the boy, nearly straddled over him, dark gaze shadowed by the fall of hair across his face.

"Please, tell me what I should *not* do, dear boy. I'm very interested to hear it."

Will swallows, eyes darting quick to the door having heard the lock, setting one hand down against the floor to brace as he forces his muscles to ease, to relax enough to allow for the stretch, gasping in utter helpless relief when he pulls the tail free and tosses it to the floor behind him.

He stays on all fours for the moment, well aware of how close Hannibal is. Aware, too, that he could probably wriggle free of the man’s grasp were he to bend to take him. “Don’t pretend you’re a fucking saint,” Will tells him, looking up, shifting to sit properly, with a wince of pain and a few quick blinks to set himself back to the here and now. “You abuse me just as soundly, do it in secret where no one can see. How does that make you any fucking better?”

He slides back quick when Hannibal does reach for him, squirms free of the hand in his hair before scrabbling to run for the door, fingers fumbling against the lock before he's turned and pinned hard against it.

"I could scream," Will whispers, and he knows just how absurd it sounds with the way Hannibal's brows rise and he laughs low.

"You scream beautifully," Hannibal tells him, smile easing back to neutrality. "But who would our Mason believe were he to be so rudely pulled from his enjoyment, hmm?"

Will swallows, eyes on Hannibal. The other blinks, almost gentle, before striking Will across the face so hard he loses his breath.

"I told you, Will, that I would not abide you swearing," comes the soft chastisement, and Will finds that all he can do when he turns his head back is surge forward and press his lips to Hannibal's, needy soft whines against him as he opens his mouth and lets his eyes close.

And when Will's body softens against him, Hannibal's hardens, all ferocity and drive, pushing brutally against the much smaller boy to trap Will between himself, here and now, and an escape by way of Mason. Will could easily reach and snap the lock open, stumble down the stairs with accusations, and so Hannibal leaves that option available to him, knowing with intense pleasure that the boy will not take it.

Not when Hannibal's lips crush against his with such dire need, when his hands slide beneath Will's thighs to lift him from the ground and hold the boy weightless against him. Will flinches, arms sliding around Hannibal's neck to steady himself, and Hannibal tilts the boy's head aside to bite softly against his ear, murmuring low.

"Am I no better?" he muses. "I could be far worse."

He carries Will easily, sliding down to seat himself in Mason's chair, and push his hands through Will's hair as the boy, wincing, adjusts to straddle him.

"Remove the collar," breathes Hannibal. "I would see you bare for me."

Will swallows, draws his hands back to fiddle with the catch, gasps quietly when he manages to work it free and toss it aside.

He knows the man could be worse. Anyone who could work that long with Mason and retain their sanity was a hard man to deal with, and the things he had done already, to others, to Will…

Will leans close again, forehead to forehead and eyes closed as he parts his lips with a smile and bites the bottom one.

"Will you give me ears as well?" he asks, partially in jest. It's strange to him how without fear he can sit astride this man where he shudders at the thought of waking up after Mason does, in case he wakes up restrained, face down, in pain already.

Firm fingers press into Will's throat, not enough to cause hurt, but enough to hold the promise of it. Hannibal tilts the boy's head to the side to kiss his jaw, still warm where he was slapped, further down to press his teeth over where his pulse runs quick beneath his pale skin.

"You would wear them if I did," Hannibal tells him. "Do not pretend you would not."

He skims a hand further around Will's thigh, cupping his ass, teasing a finger in a scarce brush against his tender entrance, just enough to force the boy to twist away from it and press himself against Hannibal. The older man's hips lift to meet his, a purr of approval rumbling from Hannibal and into the boy's skin where he kisses him.

"It is a game you must play. To keep yourself alive, now, and to keep yourself where I can reach you." There is a flatness to his tone that does not brook question of this, or what Will might actually desire, or anything but what Hannibal has decided this to be. "I will have you, and if the only means is for us both to bear him, then we will, each in turn."

Pushing a hand up the back of Will's hair, he tugs softly to bend the boy into a beautiful backward arch, laying another strike across his cheek. "For swearing," Hannibal kisses against Will's chest. Another slap, short and stinging. "For insolence towards me."

Will makes a shuddering little noise and presses his hands against Hannibal's chest, feeling how his heart has not at all sped up with this, with holding Will, with catching him. A hunter, entirely unfazed by anything or anyone.

"I am not him, Will," warns Hannibal. "Do not ever again imply that I am."

The door is still locked, Will presses his lips together in a smile regarding that, too.

"You're just as bad as each other," Will breathes, eyes hooded and down to watch Hannibal beneath him, he rolls his hips, content to tease and do little else, he's too sore for anything else. He smiles wider at the implication of possession. "You will have me," he repeats, the end tilting like a question, amused, cocky, implication of doubt in the matter beyond how blatantly obviously Hannibal already does, with Will seeking him, allowing him, aching for him when he doesn't see him.

He brings gentle fingers to Hannibal's hair and splays them, drawing nails over the scalp as he watches the man respond. A sigh parts Hannibal's lips, eyes closing beneath the gentle curl of Will's fingers through his hair, normally slicked back, tidy, and now unsettled.

"Loathsome boy," Hannibal breathes, and as his heart beats steady, so remain his words. "I have you already, and if you truly think I do not, then are you far less clever than I had been lead to believe."

He reaches to grasp Will's wrists - slender, graceful things - and bring the boy's fingers to his mouth. With another breath he traces them across his lips, presses a kiss between Will's palms as though the boy were in prayer, and his fingernails dig sharp crescents into the pale skin of his arms. Hannibal jerks the boy close by pulling his hands down to either side of his own hips, forehead pressed to Will's, eyes open and aware and inky black.

"But if I am just as bad as he, as much reviled by you, as worthy of that revulsion," he snarls, lips curled over his teeth, clenched and bared as if he were a predator, ravenous, and inches away from the tender trembling flesh of prey. "Then I will leave you to him. I will not bring you food or water when he forgets. I will not untie you so that you can piss when he leaves you for a day. I will not tend your wounds nor kiss the marks he leaves on you." With a shove that is almost effortless, he bucks the boy to the floor with a bang and stands, to stare down at the boy sprawled shocked at his feet. "I will not curb his hand. And you will no longer feel mine. After all, we are one and the same."

Will moves faster than his mind can register it as a choice, arms wrapping around Hannibal's legs, cheek pressed to his knee.

Owned, most certainly, already.

He says nothing for a time, holding tight so the man would stumble trying to step away, and at length parts his lips on an uneven breath.

"I dream about your hands on me," Will admits, voice warm, quiet, genuine with none of the false playfulness of before. "I dream you will leave marks on my skin that I can touch."

Hannibal does not draw away, but neither does he touch the boy wrapped around him in desperation, clinging to the only one who knows he's here besides the one who sits beneath them now, dreaming of horrors to paint across his chosen canvas. Hannibal parts his lips with his tongue and sets his jaw, visible displeasure.

"So much so that when I seek you out and find you, when I coerce him to leave us be so that I can enjoy you as you deserve to be enjoyed, you can do little more than smirk and sneer," Hannibal intones. "Lay insult after insult as though you have any power here at all."

Finally, he reaches, to pull the boy away from him by his hair, crouching to kneel over him, to bend the boy back so that he is forced nearly to lay, with Hannibal's other hand pressed to the floor beside him.

Crouched, feline and vicious.

"I should leave you to him."

Will draws his knees up, spreads them, eyes on Hannibal's and neck bared. He will not beg more than he has. He has already been degraded in Hannibal's eyes enough for one day. He thinks only of the fact that they have hours, genuine free hours, between them, and that he wants him.

"You do leave me to him," he says softly. "Until you find me, it's him I bend for and him I beg."

He licks his lips, parts them, slips one hand down to settle over Hannibal's that balances him against the floor, curls his fingers to cling to him there.

He doesn't beg again.

“If I run will you hunt me down?” he asks instead.

Hannibal's fingers soften, when the boy's pleas fade into a quiet sort of calm. He is strong, as fierce a fighter as Hannibal has seen before, and though he would not lay that praise on him yet, there is a curious approval in the way he regards Will before drawing his arm around him to pull him from the floor.

Seated on the ground, Hannibal settles back against the desk, knees raised and the boy straddled over him, hair a wild dark halo around his face, a battered beauty, pale and painted in bruises, parted lips flushed from desire and abuse. Gentle fingers curl against Will's cheek, sliding back to push his hair behind his ear as Hannibal leans to meet the corner of his mouth.

"I would find you," Hannibal assures him. "I would drag you back screaming if it meant that you would not be away from me. Keep you under lock and key so that he would not discover you. So that no one would know of you but me." A low rumble fills the kiss he lays against the boy's lips, eyes closed. They remain so even as their mouths part, and he turns his forehead against Will's in a gentle nuzzle. "I leave you only because I must. I would hoard you away from the entire world were I able to do so."

Will bites his lip, a soft thing, and lets it go with a sigh.

“Then I will run,” he murmurs, smiling, nuzzling the older man back in a gesture that is almost sweet, were either capable of such things. Will’s hands frame Hannibal’s face and he kisses him again, deeper.

Several weeks, now, and only this man in his thoughts.

It isn’t love, Will isn’t capable of that either.

Survival perhaps.

But undeniable obsession, addiction, and desperate ache for more. He arches back, keeping his chin ducked, his eyes barely open, lips parted. He wants. His entire body aches but he *wants*.

Hannibal doesn't know if the boy would be so foolish as to run - if he means any of the things he declares in grand youthful gestures, if he would truly try to break free of Mason in that way.

If he would do it so that Hannibal could stalk him through the streets and capture him instead.

With so little time between them, Hannibal can't bring himself to concern about it, instead forcing his hands back through Will's hair to pull the boy against him.

“You have me,” Will says gently, still a wild little thing but tamed to one hand that hasn't tried to tame it. “As often as you can before that door opens again.” A grin, wide, and Will places his palms flat against Hannibal’s chest.

The kiss is rough, tongues and lips caught in a breathless, moaning tangle until Will's hands raise to Hannibal’s face. Hannibal will have Will, and he will have him as prefers, facing with

full awareness of what he does, memories to cling to when they are unable to share another again for days and days at a time.

Hannibal works his pants open swiftly, thumbs tucked to bring them down past his hips, rocking against the boy atop of him and grasping both of their cocks together. A shared disobedience, made more delicious still when Will has to plant his hands against the edge of the desk behind Hannibal's back, gasping open-mouthed through their kiss.

It is raw need, so long since last they stole moments from each other behind the back of their mutual master, and a desperate dizzying desire to have what only the other can offer.

"On top," Hannibal instructs the boy, watching as the pretty thing moans beneath his hand.

Will shudders, toes curling in anticipation of the pain already, and knowing that he will take it, all of it, to feel this, for a change. Perhaps the only time Hannibal will be able to fuck him, properly, and not just touch and tease and promise filthy things. Another moan, stifled against Hannibal's neck, and Will sits closer, arches up on his knees and balances where Hannibal wants him, ducking his head to look.

He's big, enough to stretch already abused skin, and Will bites back the plea for mercy and gentleness. To go slowly, to use oil, *something*. Will's breath hitches when he feels Hannibal stroke his fingers against his cock again, shakes his head and grits his teeth before his jaw falls slack on soft, pained little cries as Hannibal slowly pushes in.

The start of a curse becomes a groan, drawn out and almost sobbed by the end.

"Brave," comes the murmur so soft as to be hardly heard over the sound of Will's own breath. Hannibal shifts, resisting the urge to immediately just take this boy - his boy, really - and to let him settle, much as he can, watching fascinated the twitches of pain on his face, the little gasps, the flinches and winces and finally the slackening of his mouth on a beautiful moan.

Hannibal tastes it from him on a kiss, sighing against his mouth, "Remarkable boy."

He is not cruel in the shift of his hips - not as much as he might be, as the hunger in him begs him to be - but neither does Hannibal restrain himself from matching the rhythm of the boy who rides astride him. Hannibal watches with no attention on anything but the ecstatic agony that plays across Will's features, resting a hand on his hip to guide him, dragging the other long and indulgent against his cock.

"He will try to kill you if you run," Hannibal snarls, arms sinking around the boy's middle so that Hannibal can lean to kiss his chest, to drag his teeth across it, to suck and taste the soft skin and feel the racing of his furious heart. "And you would, still, for me."

A helpless little sound and Will shivers, as much from the feeling of teeth against his skin, Hannibal pushing enough to taste his beating heart, as the feeling of being so filled, so soon, again. He aches and yet he is entirely alive with it, like flame on a wick.

Just as he had been when Hannibal had seen him so debased, just as when Hannibal had come in to Will tied down and taken, destroyed for Mason's pleasure. Always those eyes,

dark and almost blood-red, focused with pinpoint precision on Will and Will alone. From across the smoke-dense room, to the cool back corridors where Will finds himself pinned, his neck bared and hot breath against it.

“I would run,” he whimpers, “if it meant I could scream your name and not his.”

The boy is heat and movement, little turns of his hips and rolling movements down his spine, and each and every one - despite the pain in him, the fresh wounds still hot in his skin - draws Hannibal in that much deeper. Hannibal moans against Will’s throat and only just resists the urge to leave a mark sucked into his skin, their bodies pulsing faster in time now, Will’s cock leaking warmth against his fingers.

“I want nothing more than to hear it,” he breathes, and it is as surprising to Hannibal as it is to Will to discover that he means it when he says it.

He will feed the boy, still. Bring him water and medication. Loosen the bindings that wear raw into his delicate wrists when he’s able to do so without notice. And to what end? So that the boy can continue to live like this, if this can be called living, an existence bowed and bent and broken before Mason, of all the world’s monstrosities?

A frown flickers, some distant promise of displeasure before Hannibal slides his fingers through Will’s hair and brings the boy’s cheek to rest against his shoulder. With a shudder, Will adjusts just enough and parting his lips on a choked cry against Hannibal’s shirt, a soundless plea for more, again, *there*.

“You insufferable boy, do you know what you do to me?” Hannibal growls, voice low, pushing himself to sit up a little higher, drawing Will’s back into a deeper arch and tearing another sound from him, somewhere between a whimper and a sob. It thrills Hannibal that despite the pain Will is in, he is still in his lap, obediently, willingly, desperately fucking himself on Hannibal’s cock.

“On your knees in that room that morning, splayed and presented to me and I couldn’t touch you, could do nothing more than slip the leather from your throat, how I wanted you then.”

Will presses closer, digs his fingers into Hannibal’s arm, splays his free hand against the side of the desk to push against, twisting his hips when he sinks down, squeezing sore muscles when he pushes himself up onto his knees again.

“And every day since. You plague me.”

“Hannibal -” it’s soft, barely heard against Hannibal’s ear and it’s more powerful than any scream, sends the older man shuddering just as harshly as Will had. He slips his fingers into Will’s hair again and yanks him back so he can watch him.

“Eyes open,” he warns softly, and Will obeys, once more flushed in that beautiful way, sinuous, skinny body presented to Hannibal entirely, every line screaming how much this boy wants him.

“Don’t cum.”

Will sobs again, eyes closing briefly, furrowing his brows, before he blinks them open, liquid blue and wet.

He nods, words stolen by another choked-off moan as Hannibal fucks his harder and Will sets one hand back against the man's knee to balance himself, open his body further as Hannibal ducks his head to tongue a nipple, biting harsh against it.

"Please -"

Hannibal knows for what Will begs, even as his words cut short on a keening cry, stifled against the back of his own hand. He aches for marks more than Mason's - feels no joy in the bruises and welt laid into his skin from that man, and yet comes alive beneath the harshness of Hannibal's own hand.

He pleads for wounds that he can feel when it's only Mason who's upon him, to feel Hannibal in his place instead.

Hannibal does not answer the sob even when Will begs again, and again. While Mason may just as soon never notice as notice a new mark broken into his puppy's skin, the notice if it did occur - sharpened on cocaine and paranoia - would certainly mean death for Will, or make the boy wish for it.

Instead Hannibal bends the boy back further, supported by broad hands against the small of his back, so that the boy is practically laid supine across his legs. Will gasps and writhes as Hannibal's cock fills him harder, faster, deeper and the boy's wail is only muffled when he bites rough into his own hand to quiet himself.

"Marks to carry inside of you," he promises against the boy's throat, before sucking a mark over a bruise already there, to claim it as his own. "You will take his marks and I will heal them. Take his beatings and know that he is but a difficulty you must endure. You will suffer him, Will," Hannibal breathes against the boy's ear. "Not for him, but for me. He knows not what he has in you - I do, and in knowing, I have you."

He leans back against the desk hard enough to rattle it, to bring Will's hands splayed against the wood once more, the boy pressed against his chest as he works himself harder upon Hannibal's cock. Rough hands hold his hips with adoration, with tenderness, to allow the boy to work Hannibal to a shuddering release inside of him, even knowing he should not, unable to resist the pull of the boy who so fiercely endures so much pain now and before and will again.

A hard swallow tightens Hannibal's throat, a sheen of sweat along his brow, hair fallen into his face and tidy clothes rumpled into disrepair.

He brings a hand to Will's face, to settle against the warmth of it, to feel the torrid flush that blooms there.

"I have you," Hannibal breathes, and in this, a promise. "Do not let him make you doubt that I do. And when you do cum again, beautiful boy, you will think of me."

Will sobs, a genuine, sweet, young thing, and leans into the hand against him before pressing close to the man it belongs to.

"Don't leave me like this," he whispers, French almost sticky with aching need, and Hannibal lets him shudder quietly with dry sobs against his chest as he pulls free of the boy and holds him close. Proud, so fiercely proud, that Will doesn't cum, even now.

He will wait.

When the shudders subside, when Will's breathing grows slower and steady once more, Hannibal pulls him back to kiss him, a bite, sharp, to feel Will jerk in his arms, before it gentles again.

"Only me," he murmurs, stroking Will's hair before gently setting the boy to the floor and standing himself.

Will watches, shaking and exhausted and so sore, as Hannibal puts himself back together, or enough so that Mason will not be suspicious. Will knows he will have to clean himself, somehow, prepare for whatever the older boy has in mind to torment Will with later.

For now, he contents himself with looking at Hannibal from beneath sleepy lids. Splayed and still hard against his stomach, flushing more when Hannibal's dark eyes are directed at him again, devouring every inch of him where he lies.

"Come," instructs Hannibal, but even as he says it, he ducks to hoist the boy comfortably against him from the floor. There is something protective in the gesture, aware enough that Will can stand on his own strength, and not cruel enough to make him do so. He withholds a sigh between a thinning of his lips as Will nestles into the crook of his neck, head against Hannibal's shoulder, and carries him to the bed.

Will is laid there, pliant as he had been against the cold floor, and Hannibal returns to take the collar and tail from where they were dropped to the ground. The stuffed mattress shifts beneath his weight as he lets the boy curl against him where he sits, and with gentle fingers, latches the soft black collar back into place against his pale neck. He merely sets the tail aside, for Will to work back into himself when he is ready, or when Mason returns and demands it of him, and sinks his fingers into Will's hair.

"I will endeavor to keep him in his haze. Ply him with smoke enough to gentle his hand, with wine enough to keep him soft lower than that."

A final twist of fingers, tugging dark curls softly until they straighten and wind again upon release as Hannibal stands.

"Rest."

Will catches the man's hand, gently enough in his sleepiness, and brings the fingers to his lips, just tasting them, brushing them softly, before letting him go - a silent gratitude.

He turns away before Hannibal leaves the room, not wanting to see him go. He's fairly sure he's asleep by the time he hears the footsteps muffle on the floor below, or maybe he just dozes. Regardless, when Mason crawls into bed with him seemingly hours later he is wine-warmed and sleepy. And Will turns to nuzzle him back, eyes closed and imagining rougher hands, a rougher voice, and words in French telling him to sleep.

Caught

Chapter Summary

> “You bring this entirely upon yourself. You wish for it. Long for it. The lingering looks you give me, sleepy-eyed, from where you lay sprawled nearly bare across the couches during the day. The brush of your fingers against my thigh as you pass by me on your leash.”
>
> Hannibal grasps Will by his chin, arching the boy back against him as his other hand presses down the back of Will’s trousers, squeezing the pert curves.
>
> “Temptation incarnate,” growls the man. "You know precisely what game you play.”

It’s worse when it happens during the night.

During the day there is at least the chance that Mason has dosed himself enough with laudanum to sleep, or at least to collapse hard enough not to physically move to punish Will were he to hear him, and Will is sure he does.

How could he not, in the relative quiet of the den? The sound his back makes when he impacts the wall is enough to startle the barman from his usual nightly stupor and force him to glance around seeking for a dead body on the floor to dispose of.

Will squirms as he always does, this time pressed in the tiny place that passes for a corridor that runs behind the bar and out through to the street beyond. It’s cold. It’s too fucking visible.

“Stop.”

And Hannibal could care less.

“Hannibal -”

“Spread your legs.”

“No.”

Ungentle fingers thread through Will’s hair and snap his head back, neck bared and a whine on his lips.

“It was not a question,” Hannibal intones against the boy’s ear.

In truth, there's hardly enough room for Will to breathe, caught between the wall and Hannibal, let alone move his legs, so Hannibal accommodates. He slips a foot between where Will's toes press raised into the cold ground, and kicks outward, forcing Will to step wide to catch himself from falling.

"Good boy," purrs Hannibal, keeping Will's head against his shoulder as he digs his hips against the boy's backside. "You seem nervous. Has something unsettled you?"

"It's midnight." Will manages, keeping his voice as soft as he can get it. Hannibal hums, deliberately reaches for his pocket watch to check.

"Just after."

"It doesn't f-" Will swallows, reconsiders, "Doesn't matter. It's the wrong time, it is the *worst* time…"

Inside the den Mason laughs, a loud thing, as he discusses something Will is fairly certain does not interest him with a man he couldn't care less about beyond how much money he's spending here, and will continue to spend.

"Let me go, if he finds us he will end me."

Will jerks back against him and earns another shove against the wall for his trouble. Sliding his glasses back up his nose, Hannibal releases Will's hair with a gentle stroke of his fingers, turning his cheek against it.

"Perhaps," Hannibal allows. "Shall I move you, then?" The struggle stops, and Hannibal's smile widens as he hears Will's throat click, swallowing hard. "Into the street, perhaps. He's certain not to find you there, he scarcely ever leaves this place. Should I pin you to an alley wall instead, rough brick scratching against your skin, snow dampening your hair?"

Will swallows, closes his eyes tight and makes a soft sound of displeasure. He shivers, bare toes already cold on the floor as he adjusts his position against Hannibal, tries to turn his head away when the older man brings his free hand down to cup his cock, rub against it deliberately to bring Will to hardness.

And it's inevitable Will will get there, he's been thinking of nothing but the man for the last few nights Mason has tortured him. Since the tail.

He swallows all other sounds, presses his lips close together as Hannibal works him harder, and Will's treacherous body responds.

Perhaps if he can't escape he will take the pleasure of this away from the man, take the joy of the ravishment from him.

It's a lie Will hopes he can sustain even a moment more as he ducks his head and lets out a long harsh breath through his nose.

The silence is a curious one, but does little beyond pique Hannibal's interest. He strokes the boy through his trousers, broad hand swiping low between Will's legs and pressing firm as he

draws it back up again. Heat and pressure, friction steadily worked against him, until he is satisfyingly hard, and scarlet-cheeked with frustration.

“Dreadful boy,” Hannibal murmurs, tilting Will’s head aside with a hard nuzzle until he finds a bruise on his neck, and circles his lips against it to darken it.

When he finally pulls away, the mark there now Hannibal’s own, he adds with dire amusement, “You bring this entirely upon yourself. You wish for it. Long for it. The lingering looks you give me, sleepy-eyed, from where you lay sprawled nearly bare across the couches during the day. The brush of your fingers against my thigh as you pass by me on your leash.”

Hannibal grasps Will by his chin, arching the boy back against him as his other hand presses down the back of Will’s trousers, squeezing the pert curves of his ass.

“Temptation incarnate,” growls the man. "You know precisely what game you play.”

Will draws in another breath, holds it, eyes blinking open the way Hannibal holds him, seek back. After a moment, his lips split into a mischievous smirk.

He knows exactly what he does to the man, he finds it one of the few ways he can make his way back to Mason’s bed in the mornings. Knowing that Hannibal had seen him arching like a cat on the sofas, head in another’s lap, either playing bait for more customers if Mason is feeling particularly indifferent, or serving to play up his possessiveness if he feels particularly cruel.

Will loves feeling the heat of Hannibal through his trousers as he skims his fingers over them in passing, leash stark and black around his pale throat, always yanked harshly when he lingers too long with bedroom eyes on the man who cannot touch him without incurring wrath.

It is quite a game.

And these always the results. Perhaps Will should not tempt Hannibal quite so openly, if he does not want himself spread in quite so open a place.

He makes a gentle noise when he feels Hannibal rub between his legs, a deliberate tease, a show of softness Will will not feel tonight, and squirms again.

“Please not here,” he begs again. “He will whip me to strips of flesh, please.”

Hannibal knows not if the boy pleads in earnest or only to tease, and in considering it, realizes he could not care less. The dulcet sounds tug at the older man the same as if they were utterances of devotion, and in some respect, they are.

He turns a dangerous smile against Will's cheek and works his fingers harder against his opening, always tender, always raw from the treatment that both the boy's masters levy on him in turns.

"It is no wonder he wishes you for himself," Hannibal admits. "You make the most beautiful noises of distress."

A glance is spared to the open door mere meters from where Hannibal holds Will pinned. Inside, he can see Mason sprawled across a couch, arms splayed over the back of it, his back to them and his attention entirely on the patron at his side.

"Do you think he would attempt the same to me?" muses Hannibal. "Or merely punish you twice over? It would be a simple thing to discover the answer."

Will is left wanting as Hannibal slips his hand to the front of the boy's trousers, peeling them loose one button at a time.

"After all," adds Hannibal, "how could I resist you, when you seduce so wantonly?"

Will shivers, ducks his head down to watch Hannibal's hands, unerring in their certainty and their path. Even if Will were to try and stop him he would find himself sorely punished for the effort.

"If your positions were reversed, what would you do?" he hisses, genuine note of annoyance in his tone now, before he gasps and swallows hard when Hannibal wraps his hand around him bare, squeezing under the head, thumbing the slit in a teasing little flick.

"He will punish me until I wish I were dead," Will breathes, brings his hands up to press against the wall in front of himself, resigned to his fate, as it is.

"As will I if you do not obey me." Hannibal purrs against Will's ear, biting the tip gently just to feel Will jerk from it. "Will you be good? Or the obstinate little thing that he sees you as? Will I have to whip you to obedience?"

"I'd like to see you fucking try, here," Will mutters, cringes when Hannibal's hand slips to the soft skin of his inner thigh and presses against a point that sends Will's back arching in pain, though he keeps silent.

"Do not test me."

Will just swallows, barely nods.

"Again. Will you obey me?"

"Yes," Will grits out. He shivers as the fingers skirt the point of pain once more, tickle there instead with a warning.

"Yes?"

"Yes, Hannibal."

A laugh, more a sigh against Will's hair and he digs his nails into the wall, closes his eyes again.

"I don't even call him sir. I'm not doing it for you," he whispers.

Hannibal clucks his tongue, and Will is bared, trousers shoved roughly down around his thighs.

“I did not ask you to do so,” Hannibal snarls against his cheek. “Stubborn boy, there are far more beautiful uses for your mouth than snide remarks. Another, and I’ll leave a mark across your face, and you can use your cleverness to explain to Mason why it is in the shape of my hand.”

As if on cue, a harsh laugh barks from inside the den, and Hannibal’s smile widens further still as he unbuttons his own pants, and frees himself with a slow stroke. His cock settles heavy against Will’s ass, and a slow grind against the boy rubs them closely together.

His hand loosens from Will’s jaw, allowing him to breathe a little easier, but finds its way to his hair again to hold him in place there instead.

“And,” he considers, “if I did ask you for it, you would do so.” Hannibal jerks Will’s head back, bending him uncomfortably, enough to allow their lips to graze together. “You will do as I ask, simply because I ask it of you.”

Will says nothing, swallows, lets his eyes linger on the man holding him so bent, so vulnerable. In truth he could struggle harder, could batter his fists against the wall until the barman came to see what the commotion was about, could beg the man to not tell Mason, beg to be allowed to just crawl his way back up to Mason’s room and hope to hell no one talks.

He could.

Instead he flicks his eyes back, barely seeing the light from the door, where another laugh can be heard, brief but sharp, before Mason begins to talk again, rapid and amused.

He wonders if Mason is even listening to the other man as he speaks, if he is taking in any information, if it at all matters. He wonders the same about himself, when Mason beats him and whips him, pulls him and turns him every which way to hear Will’s voice hitch, to lick the tears from his lashes as he shudders in pain.

He knows he doesn’t matter.

Not to Mason Verger.

Will blinks and returns his eyes to Hannibal again, parts his lips with his tongue.

“Yes sir,” he breathes, “I will.”

“Much better,” Hannibal replies, and loosens his grip in Will’s hair to instead stroke his hand down the boy’s chest. He is shirtless, as Mason prefers him to remain, and Hannibal hardly minds this particular proclivity when it allows him to enjoy so entirely the sight of Will’s youth exposed before him. Smooth skin, hairless, not without the promise of muscle beneath, over which Hannibal’s nails rake gently enough not to leave more than pale pink lines that will fade by the time they are done.

He doesn't hold Will in place now - he has no need to, with Will finally compliant beneath him. And not by force, Hannibal is pleased to think, or rather, not by the excessive and brutal force that Mason applies to him.

Heated lips drag damp across Will's shoulder, Hannibal's tongue tracing the lovely curves of it as he ruts languidly against the boy's backside. A moment of tenderness, a flight of fancy, before Hannibal spits generously into his palm to prepare himself.

It is a short-lived mercy, before Hannibal lines himself up against Will and rolls their hips together.

"Wait, wait." It's a whisper, less a plea to stop and more a grounding for himself. The only sound Will makes at the cruel penetration is a strange squeak in his throat, his eyes wide and unseeing for a moment before he shivers and presses back against the man, lips working in whispered curses in languages he hopes the man does not know.

"Hannibal." It's a whisper, and a moan both, the boy shaking beneath Hannibal, pressed close between the cold wall and Hannibal's chest. He's up high on his toes now, legs spread as wide as the pants slung around his thighs allow them to be.

Very slowly he rocks back, bringing a hand up to bite against it to keep the sounds of pain at bay.

"You are insatiable," Hannibal praises, nearly still as he allows Will to work Hannibal into himself rather than the other way around. He skims a hand back through Will's hair, leaning to press his teeth into the boy's cheek, nipping there, his jaw, his neck as Will stifles another cry against his own hand.

Hannibal shifts his legs wider, feet to either side of Will's own, and wraps an arm around Will's waist to stroke him steadily, teasing slow.

"All the way," Hannibal whispers against Will's neck when the boy stills for a moment to let his body adjust to the cruel girth of Hannibal. A shift of hips forward, insistent, rocking Will forward with the harsh friction of it. "I want you to take it all, Will."

Will whines against his own hand, a sweet sound, keening and pained. He shakes in Hannibal's grip, from pain and need both, already close and dripping with how Hannibal strokes him, how he feels inside him.

He will take him all the way, he has before, face buried in the couch Hannibal had chased him to, flipped him against and taken him. It had been the first time Will had feared for his life, if Mason had heard, if Mason had seen.

Will's feet slip against the floor and he bites his fingers too sharply, drawing another groan of pain before he obeys, with a beautiful arch of his back, a feline movement to take Hannibal deeper still, then more as he presses back. It hurts, it's dizzying, and he is so full, he can feel his pulse against the hot sensitive skin.

When he feels Hannibal's hips against his ass Will shudders, muscles tightening against his will as he shakes his head and swallows. He grits his teeth on a weak noise when the hand against his mouth is forced away, bent almost gently behind his back. Will pants against the wall, directs his eyes to the door again.

"Hurts," he breathes, smiles where Hannibal can't see him.

Hannibal doesn't disagree, and imagines it must, substantially. The thought sends a shiver up his spine and he presses his hips a little closer.

"You suffer beautifully," he tells the boy, grinning against the arch of his throat as he begins to move inside him. The little noise he makes, hardly more than a gasp, delights Hannibal in knowing that this sweetness sounds only for him. Mason will never hear it, never earn it from this boy - at most he will hear a mockery of it, a pretension to pleasure that Will would not allow himself to enjoy at the older boy's hand.

"Moan for me," Hannibal insists, one hand bracing against Will's ass to spread him wider, and the other secured around Will's mouth to muffle the sound, not out of fear of Mason's retribution, but only out of a desire to not see this moment end so quickly.

Will's hand drops to rest against the wall again, fingers little and splayed there as his other comes up to press nails harsh against Hannibal's arm where he holds Will muffled. He doesn't want to moan, not here, not like this, where any motion, any second could be the last before Mason turns around, to the bar, to a sound, and sees them from the corner of his eye.

He has no choice in the matter, though, not with Hannibal pulling out and shoving harshly back in, and the sound Will makes is a soft keen, lilted at the end to curve it, turn it into a moan instead of just a sound.

He shudders, claws harder against Hannibal's hand and earns a sharp swat against his ass for the retaliation.

He closes his eyes tight, forgets for a moment where they are, why they are, and on the next thrust moans properly, quieted and contained, but delicious, enough to curl his shoulders and press his toes harder against the ground as Will arches.

You will do as I ask, simply because I ask it of you.

"Yes," sighs Hannibal, burying his nose in the boy's hair, releasing his mouth enough to let him breathe, and pressing his hand into the wall to steady them instead. A trust, in this, that Will won't draw attention to them, moan or shout enough to be heard - his own hide on the line, but certainly not without its own collateral damage to Hannibal in kind.

There is no more foreplay, no more teasing. Hannibal fucks into the boy hard enough to drive the breath from him in a silent parting of lips, a rough rhythm that forces Will to push against the wall in order to stop himself from being driven into it.

He grips Will in his other hand, brings him back to hardness with a few quick strokes, and shudders pleasurably against Will's back when he feels heat leak slick across his fingertips.

“Tonight I will finish in you,” Hannibal informs Will, in a tone that brooks no debate. “You will wait as long as possible to clean yourself from it, damp against your thighs as he drags you to the couch with him. Should you do so before it is absolutely necessary, I will know, dear boy, and your punishment will not be an easy one.”

“No,” Will gasps, curling his shoulders, swallowing a whimper as Hannibal does not relent. “Please, don’t…”

Another thrust, deep, and Hannibal curls his hand around Will’s cock to hold him still, hot and hard and dripping.

“You do not want to deny me, boy,” he breathes, and Will quivers against him, parts his lips against the dirty, dank wall and shivers, so close and held just on the edge of it.

“Please,” he whispers. Hannibal hums, strokes his thumb over the slit until Will jerks with it.

“Please?”

“Let me feel you,” Will moans.

“Do you not already?” laughs Hannibal, a rare sound at all, let alone here. It settles into a warm rumble against Will’s back, pulling the boy against him with an arm around his middle, and nearly lifting him from the ground as he thrusts into him. “Demanding,” he growls low, loosening his grip enough to feel Will’s cock twitch in his hand. “Wanton. Wicked boy.”

The words are harsh but fondly spoken, and not only because Hannibal is buried so deep inside Will that the boy is breathless. He is a remarkable beauty, meant for dinners with hosts of importance and dances with society girls, clever enough to be considered even beyond his looks by the university intelligentsia, given a few more years. A life of privilege and lacking in need or want, laid before him.

And yet he is here, pressed between a man who savors his suffering and a cold brick wall, in the alley corridor behind an East End opium den, spread and impaled and flushed scarlet with his own desire for it.

The juxtaposition is breathtaking, and Hannibal bends Will at the waist, nearly driving him to the ground with the relentless rhythm of his thrusts.

Will can't help the little cries that escape him, choked and weak but constant, high, wanton little things. He aches, from the thrusts, the bruises worked into his skin, the need to cum with how Hannibal holds him.

"Hannibal, please," he breathes, fingers scrabbling against the wall, down to the floor and back up. He can hear Mason laughing again, the shift against the couch. Any second now he will look for Will, call for him. And he's right here, bent over, taking everything Hannibal gives him.

"Please Hannibal, I can't, I -" Will gasps and shudders, white behind his eyes when his prostate is ground against with another brutal thrust. "I'm going to cum," he sobs.

Hannibal watches the doorway, attention focused on the movement distant within the den, grateful that it's kept so dark, illuminated only with the gaslamps spotting the walls and the flames burning low on each table for the pipes. Still, he sees the familiar white coat, the shock of pale hair far off, glancing in either direction.

Searching.

"In my hand," Hannibal breathes against Will's hair, kissing ardently to feel the soft curls against his cheeks, further down, to the back of the boy's neck, mouth spreading warmly there to taste the boy's sweat, the hints of leather lingering from the collar, the sweetness of his skin beneath it.

"Cum in my hand, Will," he insists again, eyes narrowed in pleasure. "And you will clean my fingers when you are finished."

Will makes a sound, another soft thing, and the words pull him over, body shuddering and tightening in his pleasure as he rides out his orgasm with Hannibal's hands guiding and stroking him. It feels so good, his entire body trembles with it, his heart hammers, he can barely breathe.

The next sound he makes is a laugh, gentle, innocent.

"Will?"

Will bites his lip, eyes closed tight against Mason's voice.

"He is going to fucking kill me," Will murmurs, swallowing. Then he turns to nuzzle against Hannibal's cheek, panting and flushed and spent as he is. "Mark me," he breathes, tone low, dark, pleased, "now."

The insolence of the request is thrilling, and Hannibal finds himself surprised by the sound he makes in response to Will's demands of him. More surprising still is how quickly he complies, ducking his head and bending Will forward beneath him to suck a rough mark against his shoulder, moaning low against it as he feels the boy's skin warm against his tongue.

His teeth take the place of his lips, held against the boy's skin, and he lifts his hand to Will's mouth.

It takes little more than a long, languid pull of Will's tongue against the stickiness on Hannibal's fingers for the man to muffle a groan deep in his throat, and fill the boy with warmth, hips bucking against him.

"Go," Hannibal breathes, parting his lips with his tongue and swallowing back another rumble of pleasure when he draws out of Will and watches the boy reach to catch himself against the wall. "Do not forget what I told you. I will know, boy, if you disobey me."

When Will looks back towards the man, he is buttoning his trousers with one hand, and the other, glistening pearly wet, he brings slowly to his lips, pleasure bright in his devilishly dark

eyes as he tastes Will there, a new way to know the boy and claim him.

Will pulls his own pants up, works them closed with shaking fingers as he hears his name called again, still curious, not yet angry. He turns to press Hannibal to the opposite wall of the tiny alley and sucks his fingers between his lips again. Another moan, soft, as he works them clean.

"Will?"

"I can feel you," Will gasps, ignoring the summons, opening his eyes to look as Hannibal as he sucks one finger clean, then another. "I'll be filthy like this, for hours while he keeps me here."

"Will!"

"And all I'll be able to think of is how deeply I bent for you to fuck me."

Will grins, pushes up on his toes to kiss Hannibal properly, to wrap an arm around his shoulders and laugh softly when he's bent backwards again, Hannibal's arms around his waist.

"WILL!"

"I have to go," Will gasps, lips so close to Hannibal's he can still feel them there, rough, hot against him. "Watch me."

Then he squirms away, manages to snag a bottle from the barman before feigning a trip and catching himself against the hardwood counter. Mason turns to him then, sees him entirely disheveled, sweaty, unbalanced, and equates it with the bottle.

"Here." He points to his side, sharply, and Will returns the bottle, unopened, undrunk, to the man behind the bar, who says nothing, who never does. And Will goes, draping himself against Mason's lap so he can play with his hair, show off his boy to the men he's entertaining, allow them to touch him when Will is given permission to lounge over Mason's knees, a pipe between his teeth.

To his genuine surprise, Hannibal is the one left dishevelled in the alley, to regain his breath and his composure. He watches, sidelong, through the door as Will slinks across the den, and Hannibal takes his time to tuck in his shirt again, smooth back his hair, and wipe the smudges from his glasses.

He can still taste Will on his lips as he parts them with his tongue, sighing, and lights a cigarette before finally venturing inside.

"Well, now the gang's all here," Mason chirps as Hannibal passes by his couch towards the front door. The man pauses as though surprised by the summons, regarding only the older boy, and not the dark-haired beauty coiled obediently across his lap. "Where the hell have you been? You're missing all the *fun*, Hannibal."

“Taking care of our mutual interests,” he replies easily, sighing smoke and holding the cigarette between still-sticky fingers.

Mason snorts. “How incredibly *business-oriented* of you, Hannibal. How incredibly *professional*. Why don’t you try *enjoying* yourself for once?”

Hannibal draws a long breath through his nose, brows lifting as he waits for an instruction - to sit, to smoke, to stay - and finds none forthcoming. Mason stretches over Will to take up the pipe for himself, nearly unseating the boy to the floor, and in the moment of distraction, their eyes meet. Will holds his bottom lip between his teeth, arm curled underneath his head, and Hannibal notices that his fingers rest against the mark that Hannibal left bruised fresh against his shoulder.

It is all Hannibal can do not to react by dragging the boy into his arms, and the impulse catches him off-guard.

He blinks, and takes another drag.

“Was there anythi-”

“God,” sighs Mason. “No. No. I mean, yes. Of course. There’s always *something*, isn’t there?” He twists away when Will reaches for his hair again, expression thin with disapproval before loosening. Pale blue eyes - ghostly - turn towards Hannibal over the gold-wire rims of glasses. “Go,” Mason tells Hannibal, before a grin splits across his face. “Someone has to keep our interests in mind.”

Hannibal returns his smile readily, and holds his fingers - salty still, around the filter of his cigarette - against his lips for a moment more before he sighs.

“Always.”

Just Words

Chapter Summary

> “I want you to lay with me,” Mason declares. “It has been a *torment* only getting to touch you so much tonight.”
>
> Will’s eyes widen but he says nothing either way, in agreement or displeasure. He wonders just how much, what balance, Mason has had to bring him to this, an odd sort of pliancy that passes for something almost human. Right now, in front of Will, stands an exhausted boy in his early twenties, not the man who runs this den without a single care for cost.
>
> His request is strangely endearing. Will has no idea what to make of it.

Dawn creeps to the horizon by the time Mason pushes Will from his lap with a laugh.

And catches him before he hits the floor.

"Up. Stairs."

The smile is familiar, that same strangely genuine expression he had worn when he had gone to buy Will his tail. The men they had both been entertaining - and they had, both, Mason with his words and Will with his body, being touched and stroked and moaning prettily for them around the pipe always at his lips - look on almost displeased.

Mason turns to them and, to Will’s surprise, politely holds out his hand.

"Gentlemen. A true and thorough pleasure, *really*, we must again. Soon. But there is only so much patience one man has and this man can no longer look at his boy, he must simply take him."

Laughter, murmurs of assent, of more thoroughly filthy things that could pass for suggestions as Will kneels by Mason’s side and rests his cheek against his thigh. Then he's gently roused and directed upstairs again, where he goes on unsteady feet.

The walk is uneventful only in that Will makes it entirely without incident, and only upstairs realizes his error of keeping his word to Hannibal.

Will seeks, without success, something to mask the obvious, something to clean himself with so Mason will not see, and in his search, hindered to near impossible slowness by the smoke weighing down his limbs, ends up pressed against Mason’s chest as the other follows Will upstairs and clicks the door locked.

Will smiles.

Frighteningly, Mason smiles back.

"You," he murmurs, a hand up to stroke Will's hair, "are a classy little entertainer aren't you? Kept their attention where it needed to be kept. My good boy."

Will blinks wide at the praise, gentle, *genuine*, and bites his lip on a look of almost childish delight.

Mason hums, slips a hand to stroke his cheek, too, before gently pushing Will away.

"Cigarettes on my desk. Light me one, too, could use a break."

Will finds himself there before he realizes he moved, two filters between his lips and the acrid smoke from the match before he realizes he's done it, and it hits him then why he feels so unbalanced, so strangely calm and *comfortable*: Mason has not once hit him, berated, slandered, since he had pulled Will into his lap some six hours before.

Not once.

Instead, Mason is at the mirror, eyes narrowed in scrutiny of his own reflection, glasses tossed onto the bed behind him. He works loose the stiff collar of his shirt, sighing in relief.

"It's a risk, you know, having you around like that," Mason considers, with a glance towards Will as the boy ambles closer. "Worth it, though, you were a *draw*. It's a poor man's crime, anyway, if you can outbid the snitch then the courts hardly care. Unless you get Justice Wills, wow," laughs the older boy, before squinting down at his buttons. "Bad luck, but that's the hand you get dealt when you go around fucking royals, I suppose."

He lifts his eyes towards the looking glass as Will settles behind him and presses a cigarette to Mason's lips. His own perched smoldering in his mouth, Will gently pushes aside Mason's hands to undo his buttons. To both their surprise, Mason doesn't shove away the contact as he normally would, not even when Will slips his hands beneath the smooth cotton shirt.

"Good thing I'm not a Marquess," Will notes, voice softened by smoke and amusement.

"*Better* thing is that those two *fine gentlemen* who were fondling you are consummate degenerates," snorts Mason, smoke pluming from his nose before he opens his arms to let Will slide the shirt free, and turns to face him.

He tugs the younger boy nearer, cigarette aloft in one hand, and the other arm around Will's slender waist.

"I feel funny," Mason grins, shivering pleased when Will rests his arms over his shoulders.

"Maybe you're in love," Will deadpans, but it's enough to make them both laugh, and Will takes the cigarette to ash it into the nearest glass.

This is unfathomably odd, all of it. Mason's demeanor, his tone, his softness. And Will wonders if he is simply too tired to keep up his insanity game over and over, day in day out.

It must be exhausting.

And Will is fairly sure that once in a while he sees this Mason, between the gaping maw of his insane counterpart. In a smile or a sigh, or when he remembers to feed Will and it's not Hannibal bringing him water.

"Starved for good company," Mason responds, and Will realizes he's let himself drift in thought, though Mason hardly seems to care.

Again, Will thinks how he is very handsome when he's not tense to the point of pain with his cocktail of drugs. Will brings the cigarette to his lips and exhales slowly, eyes on Mason, before he licks his lips and sets the cigarette between them again.

"Were they worth the effort?" he mumbles around the filter, deft fingers up to work the suspenders slowly from his shoulders, watching as Mason continues to allow the touches and treatment as he smokes. "For you to spend all night talking to them. You were before I showed up."

Will flicks his eyes up and takes the cigarette from his mouth to exhale again. There is an inquisitive look exchanged, Mason's brow furrowing in thought, but whatever thought snagged him is quieted and quickly forgotten.

"I certainly hope so," Mason scoffs, sighing. "Otherwise I've just used a lot of good stock for nothing. You never can tell with those types, if they're actually interested in *business* or just *pleasure*. Although there's enough just from tonight that I could," a laugh warms through his words, "I could certainly force their hand if I wanted to. The most valuable part of business meetings, really. *Dirt*."

If it wasn't a suspect and strange mood before, it certainly becomes one when Mason holds his hands out to Will. It isn't a demanding gesture, but rather an allowance, for his ubiquitous leather gloves to be removed.

They are, with a look of intense curiosity that manages not to rankle Mason into snarls for Will to avert his eyes, not to look at Mason that way, not to touch, not to move…

Instead, he simply plucks the cigarette from Will's lips again, sighing a long curl of smoke towards the ceiling, and deposits it in the glass near them. Mason's mouth presses there in place of it, to taste Will, bare hands held against the younger boy's skinny arms.

"I want you to lay with me," Mason declares. "It has been a *torment* only getting to touch you so much tonight."

Will's eyes widen but he says nothing either way, in agreement or displeasure. He wonders just how much, what balance, Mason has had to bring him to this, an odd sort of pliancy that passes for something almost human. Right now, in front of Will, stands an exhausted boy in his early twenties, not the man who runs this den without a single care for cost.

His request is strangely endearing. Will has no idea what to make of it.

But he goes regardless, moves to lead Mason to the bed instead of being dragged to it himself, and crawls in to curl against the pillows - a rare place he's even allowed when he's not restrained down against them one way or another. It's strange, comfortable, and his entire body feels heavy from drugs and tiredness, from the strange mood filling the room.

He tucks an arm under his head and watches Mason with slightly narrowed eyes, scrutinizing but not displeased.

"I'm surprised you let them touch me," he says at length. It's not uncommon for Mason to use Will as bait, but rarely as an accessory to a deal. Mason settles onto his back, peeling his shoes off with his toes and letting them thud to the floor. One arm tucks behind his head, against the pillow, and the other hand settles in Will's hair to wrap a curl of it around his fingers.

"Why shouldn't I?" he asks. "I was concerned with making sure *they* were comfortable. I get to touch *now*, they got to touch you a little *then*, it works out for everyone, really. Where were you?"

Will blinks, and Mason turns his head to the side to watch Will, tracing a fingertip down his nose, across his lips.

"Where were you before that?" asks Mason again. "I was looking for you. None of the little ones would tell me, the monsters."

Will swallows. Thinks of how quickly Hannibal had grabbed him, hand against the back of his neck, how fast he had shoved him into that alley and pushed him to silence. He knows that a few of them would have certainly seen. He wonders what food he can bring them next time to keep that loyalty.

The thought sits sick in his gut, though he never brings them food for a profit, does not collect himself a loyal following.

The boys never eat unless Mason remembers.

Mason rarely remembers.

"Barman had me out back bringing more bottles in," he lies, knowing that that man won't talk either - an easy excuse considering he cannot. He arches his back just a little, feeling Mason's fingers press against his skin, parts his lips as he speaks to let the man feel the heat of his tongue. "I might've… had a little."

"A little? You were *staggering*," laughs Mason, his tone relatively stable, not pitching startlingly loud or wildly high. "When the cat's away, the mice will play." He pauses, reconsiders, lips pressed together in thought. "Or… when the dog's away, the cats will play? But -"

He draws a deep breath and releases it all at once, shaking his head to clear where his thoughts snared, and tugs his fingers slowly free of Will's mouth to sink his hand back through his hair instead, delighting bright-eyed at the feel of it without gloves between them.

"Pretend I just said all of that about puppies, instead," Mason grins, ducking their heads together to kiss Will slowly, catching the boy's lower lip to suck softly before releasing him enough to breathe.

Mason touches across Will's jaw, down his neck, and up across his chest, chasing the touch with his mouth and turning Will onto his back to kiss there instead, pale and smooth, as his hands work lower to Will's pants.

"I am glad you joined me, eventually," admits the older boy, blonde hair spread wild, fallen into his face. "Bad form stealing nips behind the bar when you know I'd *give* them to you."

Will grins, lifts his hips into the touch and relishes in the first time in months that he can recall, where he is touched gently. By either of the men who play with him and torment him. It's such an odd feeling, snares in his stomach to something warm and weightless and Will bites his lip.

"Sorry," he sighs, hesitating before finally setting his fingers into the blond hair, finding it soft, warm, not at all dirty as the way it stands up has him believing. He shivers when he realizes he's *allowed*. "Next time we'll share," he tells him, squirming delightedly beneath warm lips and soft fingers as Mason keeps tasting him, down his chest, down his stomach, lower…

And then Will freezes, holds his breath, eyes wide and up at the ceiling in utter terror. He shifts experimentally against the hands holding him, trying to wriggle free, to distract to something else instead, so Mason won't undress him, not here, not till he's had time to -

"You are *wiggly*, aren't you?" Mason laughs, a burst of pleasure in the quiet room, kissing Will's stomach, satisfied when the boy writhes beneath him, muscles tensing. "*Fine*," he sighs, and tugs his fingers against the waistband of Will's trousers to push himself back up against the length of the boy's body, settling heavy between his legs. "*You* get on top, then."

He relents easily, no force behind the lazy movements of his hands as they skim free of Will's body, and Mason slumps back comfortably onto his back. His glasses are set aside, eyes rubbed almost sleepily before he glances towards Will from beneath his hand. There is warmth, more than madness, in the curious grin that appears when Mason extends his arms above his head to rest his hands over the headboard.

A balance struck, between them both, in Mason himself - an entirely unintentional stasis between his own mind and the chemicals he smokes, pours, and snorts into it, that has somehow rendered him into this, a fond and almost charming boy, spoiled but not made rotten by it.

He catches Will's hand as it reaches for him, fingers firm around his wrist, to bring the boy's fingers to his mouth and kiss the tips of them, eyes drifting comfortably closed at the tenderness of the sensation, no more stimulation needed than that.

“All mine,” Mason murmurs, before another loud laugh splits the quiet.

Will finds that he smiles back, still shocked at the transformation, curious as to how it even came about. He allows the soft touches, splays his fingers to feel warm lips beneath, lets his eyes flicker over the man sprawled beneath him.

A boy with so much power. But a boy nonetheless.

Will ventures, tries, too used to pain befalling him to be able to relax entirely but pliant enough. He bends, sets his lips against Mason’s neck and draws them lower.

A soft sound, one Will has never heard from Mason before, and he smiles, presses closer in a pretty arch of his back to let his lips explore the body he is never allowed to touch, let alone put his mouth against, above the waist.

Mason is muscle, lean, subtle muscle. Not an inch of fat on him, not an inch of anything that did not belong there. Will wonders how he even has this, when he does nothing but drug himself, sleep and socialize. He never runs, never leaves the den unless direly necessary. In a very amused moment, Will finds himself envying the man his easy-gotten physique, when he himself looks more and more like a starved rat every day.

He finds, though, that he can’t answer Mason’s amused claim with an honest answer. He can still feel his thigh slick and messy from hours before. Wonders if he really should admit his indiscretion, cut out one angle from his life to smooth the rest of it. He wonders how and if he will ever see Mason like this again, and finds that he almost wants to.

“Take your trousers off,” Mason tells him, settling a hand against Will’s thigh, following up the curve of his back to his shoulders, and tugging - rather than pulling - Will’s hair to bend their mouths together. “I want to see you.”

Words that would be shouted or snarled normally, demanded with swift retribution to follow not acting fast enough, if Mason didn’t simply turn the boy onto his stomach and yank them from Will himself. This time, this singular time, he waits instead, perhaps instead enjoying the pull of power that comes with asking nicely, and receiving.

Goosebumps spring along Mason’s skin as Will presses his hand against his cheek, and Mason tilts against the touch with a pleased, high sound at something so rarely felt. Hannibal touches his face sometimes, when Mason is hardly standing but digging deep to rile himself into a fit, broad hand pressing over his eyes, across his mouth, some strange way of soothing Mason into a quieter place.

The last time Will tried to touch his face he’d nearly had his nose broken by the speed with which Mason threw a hand up to stop him and jerked away growling.

Now, though, he turns into it like a cat, eyes closing and hands relaxing against Will’s skin where they rest. He wonders if he can distract further from it, if he can coax the man into a stupor by taking him into his throat, or gently touching him until Mason falls asleep. It’s a pleasant thought, if entirely unrealistic.

Will considers how he could fake what's there, how he could explain away the obvious marks of another's claiming when he is Mason's, and in that man's mind belongs to no other unless he's loaned.

Will leans to kiss where his hand had been, feeling Mason smile against it, the laugh here soft still, though now tinted with something a little more demanding.

"Just wait a moment," Will tries, soft, lips up in a smile as well, reassuring, playful. "You wanted to touch me. Take your time, we're not going anywhere."

Mason lowers his other hand from where it grasped lazily against the headboard, and loops his arms around Will's shoulders. He rolls his hips upward, languid and needy, and still gentled despite the other boy's daring protestation.

"But I want to *see* you," insists Mason with a wide grin, allowing himself to be kissed, touched, pressed close against another warm body. "You've been dressed all night, it's *terrible*."

His hands are strong but soft, untouched by work or duty, as he rubs them along the length of Will's back, across the mark bitten into his shoulder that Mason has yet to see, may not even notice if he did, among the countless kaleidoscope of bruises that smear dark across Will's body. He is sleepy-eyed with the particular assortment of drugs thrumming languid through his veins, gentled by the unexpected pleasure of the tender touches of the boy astride him.

"You could at least take *mine* off," he sighs, an affected huff.

Will laughs, relieved, and moves to do so, hands careful on the belt that he has so often felt against his thighs, against his back in a rage. He knows how it cuts. Now, though, he runs his fingers over it carefully, down to the buttons, until he coaxes Mason's hips up to pull the pants from him.

Again that strange tug, irrational and entirely unwelcome, against Will's chest that presses him into guilt over what happened before this, when he had been up against a wall forced into silence and pleasure both. Forced to take something that would quite literally endanger his life if found.

He wishes he could swear, shove it back against Hannibal like a small child throwing a tantrum.

Look what you did.

Look what you made me do, and how I suffer for it.

Look, and see more than a boy to tear apart.

With a sigh, Will sets his mouth against Mason's cock, eyes closing and lips parting, feeling the deliberate shiver this draws, done so willingly, so well for Mason without the pain that usually comes before this.

“Off, Will.” Another laugh, weaker now, with the way Will’s tongue coaxes him. “I want you bare.”

And Will knows that he can’t delay this again, that he can’t hide this any longer, but that he has a chance - while Mason lies languid, eyes half closed and out of focus - to mask it, adjust it, do something to save himself.

He obeys slowly, distracting with the rest of his body as he draws his pants down, runs the fabric almost cruelly between his legs, against his thighs, to clean them even a little before he rests bare on all fours over Mason, eyes up beneath the fluffy hair. Obedient. His puppy.

Mason hums a note of delight, and reaches with bare hands to frame Will’s face, pushed against his cheeks. A thumb across his mouth, the other beneath his eye, before he slides one back through Will’s hair to sweep it from his face and meet his eyes.

“Good boy,” Mason grins, dragging Will nearer to kiss him. They taste of smoke, of wine, each other, now, and Mason rolls his hips upward again to seek out Will’s cock, hanging hard, to brush his own against it. He rarely lets himself be so entirely bared, almost always some element of clothing hanging from his body, and there’s an innocence to the gesture now, too thick with resin to worry about anything other than seeking more pleasure from Will, who he knows will yield it to him.

“You are very well-behaved tonight,” he praises the boy. “Hannibal always says you are, but I spend so much *time* having to *tell* him how naughty you can be.” Mason sighs against Will’s mouth, catching his lips in another kiss, a note of delight held between them before he draws back to laugh. “He says he’s going to ‘teach me how a dog should be trained, to come to its master’s hand’,” Mason mimics, the heavy accent of the man laughed away from his voice. “God, he’s *tiresome* sometimes.”

Another push of their hips together, brushing hard against the other, and Mason lets his eyes close at the sensation as Will rubs a steady rhythm down against him.

“I’m doing just fine without him,” Mason decides.

Will sighs, a heavy sound, filled with too many words he should say and won’t. His throat clicks when he swallows, ducks his head against Mason as he keeps rolling their hips together, moans softly against Mason’s ear to feel the older boy shiver in pleasure knowing he drew that sound from him when he rarely draws anything from Will at all.

Mostly sobbing.

Sometimes tears.

Rarely screams.

But never this. Never this soft, gentle, willingly given.

Will continues the undulations, pushes himself up on his arms so Mason can see the only partially feigned look of utter pleasure on his face, as his cheeks flush, his lips part, eyes

closed for the moment.

“I can be good for you,” Will gasps, bites his lip, lets his eyes open, up to watch Mason beneath him. Will arches his back and slides his legs wider, a wanton little thing as he had been downstairs, but here, Mason’s own. Enough, for the man to believe it.

He tightens his arms around Will and rolls to his side, keeping the boy held against him, their legs wrapped together to pull their hips close again and again. Mason follows Will’s movement when Will tilts back his head on another little sound and kisses his bared neck, his throat. A tightness in the way Will swallows, expecting to be bitten, but it never comes, and instead Mason’s gentleness lingers, up across the other boy’s throat with his tongue, to meet his lips.

“You are -” Mason laughs, and it cuts his words short, eyes bright with surprise. “This is -” he tries again, another laugh buried against Will’s shoulder, and now his teeth press but don’t tear, drawn away with a kiss. “You are a *delight*.”

It is an earnest, youthful thrill for the spoiled older boy, to discover that something so simple could be so much fun. Just the meeting of their bodies, sliding lazily together, a sleepy heaviness to the weight of them both. Slowly, Mason’s hand lowers from Will’s shoulder, follows the bend of his back to the curve of his ass, gripping it in a firm squeeze.

Will arches, bites his lip and keeps his eyes closed as Mason pulls him closer against himself, enough to draw a sigh from Will, a soft sound of pleasure. He hooks his leg over Mason’s hip and curls his toes, running soft nails over and over Mason’s back until the other laughs again.

It’s strange to think that someone who spends so long with another body pressed against theirs would be so utterly naive to things like this, soft and gentle things, brushes of fingers, touches to skin and warm lips. Innocent, almost. It’s almost funny if Mason wasn’t the man Will had seen every day since he had been kept here, hurting and drinking and dosing over and over.

He moves to kiss under Mason’s jaw again, across to his cheek, fingers snaring in his hair and scratching gently over the scalp.

Anything to have him distracted as his fingers walk deliberately over Will’s thigh to the warm join between his legs.

“Mason...”

Eyes like ice, so pale they can hardly be called blue, lift at the sound of his name, and a slow smile curves his lips. Sedate, almost content, as far from the constant buzz of energy that somehow keeps him alive despite what he daily does to himself as can be, Mason presses their mouths together again in a clumsy kiss.

Both hands curve around Will’s backside now, to pull them into a tighter rut. Mason’s fingers outstretch, fanning out to stroke softly against Will’s opening, once.

Twice.

There is not a third touch, but his hands spread against Will's thighs, and the kisses slow.

And stop.

Mason jerks his head away when Will leans towards him again. His smile falls away, his eyes seem to darken beneath a furrowed brow.

Will swallows. Feels his heart speed up. Doesn't try to touch Mason again beyond how they are wrapped together already.

"He wouldn't stop," he breathes, eyes flicking between Mason's, now stone-hard and unmoving. "Not until you called my name. I couldn't make him, I -"

Will bites his lip, and it frightens him how quickly he can feel the temperature shift on Mason's expression, from cool to cold, a solid wall between what Will had just seen and the Mason he has grown used to experiencing. He makes another soft sound, wonders if Mason knows it's in apology. Wonders if he even cares anymore.

"I didn't want to."

A sigh - a laugh, maybe, in some way - of disbelief. Mason's fingers spread, away from Will's skin, stretching as though he's surprised to find them there, wetting his lips with his tongue and alarmed equally to find the taste of Will on them.

"You," he breathes, another throttled sound, "you didn't want to. You didn't *want* to," he confirms again. The words are sticky on his tongue, cloying, and his nose wrinkles in distaste before he forces himself to swallow down all the bile burning acidic across his tongue and hisses softly. "Get *off* of me."

Will's breath shudders out of him and he slowly slips off the man to obey, slinking to the very edge of the bed before he curls his legs beneath himself and sits up, eyes down, cheeks burning with humiliation and upset. He doesn't say anything else. He knows the Mason that may have believed him is gone, no longer here. And this one will not listen.

Very slowly he raises his eyes and blinks. Waiting.

And for an instant their eyes meet and when they do Mason is lost, inside himself, a softness lingering still in the narrowing of his eyes that speaks of sensations that Mason himself can't decipher. It is hurt that shines briefly in his eyes, lips parting as his breath shortens.

Disbelief.

Confusion.

Anger.

Mason finds himself again. Naked, entirely, the feel of dried cum still flakey against his fingertips, exposed. The blanket against which they lay is jerked against his chest so hard it nearly unseats Will, who is forced to shuffle off of it as Mason slides unsteadily from the bed and stands, wrapping himself in it.

Jaw working, the silence is deafening as Mason slips his glasses back onto his face, and regards Will at a distance.

“You didn’t *want* to,” he reiterates, his voice perilously low. “Until I *called your name*.”

Slowly, Will shakes his head. It’s a lie, it’s a blatant, outright lie but it’s all he can do to not slip to his knees and beg the man to let him walk out of here alive.

It is rare that he’s genuinely scared of Mason.

Now Will sits terrified.

“He wouldn’t stop,” he whispers, “until he heard you looking for me.”

He knows it won’t matter. None of it will matter. He lets his eyes linger on the belt, still in the loops of Mason’s pants, flick to the drawer where he keeps the crop and collar, and all manner of things Will does not want to feel against his skin and knows will be forced to.

“I don’t know who he was,” he adds, soft. “Some guy. He left when he let me go. I’m -”

Will swallows the word and soundlessly slips to the floor to sit against the bed as Mason usually has him, hoping to deflect even a little of his ire.

“You’re,” Mason responds, dragging out the word to fall heavy off his tongue, his own body nearly doubling over from the weight of the statement. Clutching the blanket around himself, he stays bent, watching Will unblinking over the top of his glasses. “You are. You were, while I was looking for you.”

The blanket drags across the floor as Mason circles closer, rattled, clearly, but being dropped so suddenly back into himself, from a place he’s never been before, to find *this*.

“*You* didn’t say anything. Didn’t tell me. Didn’t call for me to come and stop this *person* from something you *know* is not *allowed*,” snarls Mason, voice rising, as he stands and pushes a hand up through his hair.

“You *knew* that I was right there *waiting* and only when he heard *me*,” Mason seethes, looming over Will, a shrouded spectre, whose voice suddenly goes silent.

A blink, slow.

“How did he know I was calling for you?”

Will’s lips part and he knows he has no answer. Nothing that could even be viable, here, now, nothing that would even pass for a good lie. Nothing.

If he says Hannibal’s name, he will not be believed, Hannibal would deny it, would never look at Will again. If he says nothing, the pain is just as cruel, the man before him just as heartless and cold in delivering it.

“He just stopped,” Will breathes, presses his lips together, eyes closing in resignation. “I don’t know why.”

Mason can hardly breathe enough to laugh but manages a strangled facsimile of it, pushing his fingers against his eyes before remembering the filth on them, and dropping them just as quickly.

“You know,” he sighs, eyes focused on the ceiling rather than the boy grown pale at his feet. “There’s a lesson in this. There is, truly. That no matter what I *do* for you - no matter how much I let you smoke, drink, lay around *useless*,” he breathes through his teeth. “No matter how *kind* I am to you, it is - really - no matter to you.”

The betrayal in the act, whether Will’s fault or not - the exposure that Mason allowed himself - snaps his body tight, hunches his shoulders, makes his hand motions fast, furtive as he waves towards the pants Will tossed to the floor.

“The belt. Hand it to me.”

“Mason - “

“*Hand* it to me *now*,” shouts Mason, startled by the ringing of his own voice, and snatching the leather away from Will’s shaking hands when he offers it up to him. “Papa and I were of the same mind in this - the moment you show an animal kindness is when it turns to bite the hand that feeds it. If you keep them *cowering*, they’ve not got the *stuff* for it.”

Curling it around his fist, Mason lets it snap against the floor, his other hand still gathering the blanket around his shoulders. “He just stopped,” Mason echoes, “but I won’t.”

Recovery

Chapter Summary

> “We have spoken about this,” Hannibal reminds the boy that shakes now beneath him. One hand is pressed against Will’s wrist, the other the back of his neck, and a knee resting on the couch, shoved roughly between his legs. An edge sharpens his words as he leans low over Will, displeased to have his playful mood so summarily dispersed. “I have told you never to compare me to him. We are not the same, we will never be, and should you care to say so again -”
>
> “You’ll make me suffer?” seethes Will.

Will doesn’t know what time it is, what day. He has no idea if he has slept or drifted, and if the floor feels soft because he has been lying on it so long or because the rest of his body feels hard. And cold. He’s not shaking anymore, at least, just lying there pliant, hands outstretched and fingers curled, chest rising and falling softly on short quick breaths.

He knows one thing, though: Mason is not upstairs anymore.

After that he just closes his eyes and dozes more.

It’s morning by the time he wakes up again, soft breathing, uneven, from the bed indicates it’s late morning, if Mason is sleeping, if he had passed by Will and not struck him again - a miracle in itself.

Will forces himself up, bites back any sounds of pain that escape him as he finds his spare pair of pants, another shirt, slips both on and pushes himself to stand.

He manages, hunched, barely moving, to get downstairs and curls up on the sofa in the corner, where no one will see him unless they go looking. He accepts the water - in a glass - that one of the boys brings him and just smiles when he natters at him in Turkish, curious and little, brushing Will’s hair out of his face for him.

“I’m okay,” he murmurs. “I’m fine, I’m okay. Go sleep. Go.”

He manages half the water before he coughs, and the rest ends up on the floor. Will watches it long enough to watch it soak into the floorboards, but by that point his eyes roll back and he’s out cold and far enough away in his mind for it not to matter.

The midday light does not permeate the den, no windows on the ground floor to allow anyone within to feel the pull of fresh air or sun. Hannibal waits, squinting towards where the snow reflects brightly in patches not yet decimated by soot and dirt, and returns his attention to the door when it is dragged open by little hands.

“Hello,” he greets the boy, in passable Turkish. “May I come in?”

Dark eyes narrow on him, and Hannibal exaggerates a sigh. “A toll,” he tells the boy, and the child repeats the word, agreeably, before thrusting out a hand. It earns him a disapproving hum but Hannibal fishes in the pockets of his long coat before revealing a hard candy, which he deposits in the boy’s palm.

“Now may I come in?”

“Yes,” the boy grins, tugging open the door so much larger than himself to let Hannibal slide into the darkness, and out of the light.

His coat is hung, his silk top hat beside it, and he blinks past his glasses to let his eyes quickly adjust. Quick fingers catch the boy’s sleeve as he ventures off, and Hannibal reels him gently back in, ducking to his height.

“Is Mason here?”

The boy glances to the stairs, and Hannibal again.

“Sleeping?”

“Yes.”

“How long?”

A quick shake of his head - he doesn’t know - and Hannibal lets him vanish off into the den. It’s only on his way to the stairs, himself, to stir Mason and discuss how last night’s meeting went, when Hannibal catches sight of a pale body, bigger than the boys who normally spend their days curled up small as housecats on the couches, and angles towards it instead.

He leans across the back of the plush, worn velvet, and allows a hand to skim across the side of the boy sleeping there.

“Will,” Hannibal murmurs, eyes alight even in this darkness. “Come.”

Will jerks, not painfully but enough for his wake-up to be uncomfortable. He blinks, tries to make sense of where he is before it registers that someone is touching him and he turns quickly to trap that hand between himself and the back of the couch, teeth bared both in pain and in a snarl ready to fight back if it got violent.

It doesn’t.

But the person Will sees does not cause his expression to soften.

“Not today,” he growls softly, shifting just a little and wincing in pain before he settles, directs his eyes up to Hannibal again when the man doesn’t move. “He’s upstairs.”

“And we are here, and what luck we have in that,” Hannibal agrees in a purr, eyes turned upwards to assure himself of no other presence in this part of the den, leaning lower over Will

as he watches. “Men at some time are masters of their fates,” he quotes, a slow smile lasting as he lets his fingers trail along Will’s body, circling the couch towards the front.

“Are you so worn?” asks the man, but as he receives no answer, he feels his mouth twist, and his jaw harden. Silence permeates the place, until Hannibal speaks again, a lower register. “I am not asking, Will.”

“Neither of you ever do,” Will hisses, eyes on Hannibal long enough to watch the anger register there, a familiar dig at the man who hates so much being compared to Mason, and who, in many ways, is so much like him.

After a moment he looks away, turns his head to the back of the sofa, breathing in the stale smell of smoke and sweat from countless bodies that have laid and sat atop it.

When he feels Hannibal touch him again he lashes out, a quick strike that doesn’t quite leave nail marks on Hannibal’s hand, but enough for the ghost of them to be a warning. After that, the man has no patience to threaten, just bears down on Will as the other writhes, twists against him teeth gritted until Hannibal snares his thigh and then Will cries out, a high desperate noise of pain, and lies pliant, shivering, against the sofa again.

“We have spoken about this,” Hannibal reminds the boy that shakes now beneath him. One hand is pressed against Will’s wrist, the other the back of his neck, and a knee resting on the couch, shoved roughly between his legs. An edge sharpens his words as he leans low over Will, displeased to have his playful mood so summarily dispersed. “I have told you never to compare me to him. We are not the same, we will never be, and should you care to say so again -”

“You’ll make me suffer?” seethes Will, nearly spitting anger, and he throws his free arm behind his shoulder to dig his nails into Hannibal’s wrist. The older man watches, regulating his pulse to steady, and his eyes narrow.

Shoving his leg harder, to spread Will across the couch, the choked sound the boy makes brings Hannibal to stop, motionless, and loosen his grip where they were placed.

Will grits his teeth, pants in pain and still manages to glare at Hannibal atop him. The older man regards him before bringing a hand down between them to work the button on Will’s pants.

"Fuck," Will groans. “You won't stop, will you? Not till I'm dead and useless to you - aah!"

Hannibal does nothing more than slide the fabric down to see, finding a bright welt, already bruising, across Will’s hip. He pauses, lets go of Will where he held him to slide both hands, now utterly gentle, to pull Will’s shirt up and reveal more cruel marks. His throat works, and Will begins to shake again, expression flickering between livid and terrified. "What happened?"

Will snorts, turns his head away, eyes up to seek for the door upside down as Hannibal continues his scrutiny. At length, Will parts his lips with his tongue. "I obeyed,” he whispers.

It takes Hannibal a moment more to put the pieces together - his demands, his instructions, Will's obedience as he promised to follow through, standing on his toes to kiss Hannibal for as long as he could steal before disappearing back into the den.

Bruises, now, blooming like violets across the boy's skin. Split scarlet where the belt cut, welts raised thick enough that Hannibal can feel them raised hot beneath his fingers.

It is a wonder he has managed to drag himself away from Mason.

It is a wonder he has managed to maintain consciousness at all.

Hannibal is cautious, silent, as he rests his hands not against the boy to hold him in place but rather on either side of him, kneeling still into the couch. His lips graze hot against the back of Will's neck, eyes closed. "Will," he breathes.

Will makes a sound, a pained thing, but doesn't move, lying rigid as he's held, trembling when Hannibal kisses against him where he is just too sensitive. For long moments the gentle caresses continue, and then Will unfurls, like cut strings, curls forward before pressing back against Hannibal with a dry sob.

Everything hurts. Will wants nothing more than to lie here forever, untouched and left entirely alone. But he finds himself, now, pressing against Hannibal more, seeking comfort from him here despite the man being entirely responsible for his injuries.

"He beat me till he got tired," Will murmurs, shivering still as Hannibal tries to see the full extent of the damage. Even Will isn't sure what it is. He hopes nothing is broken, he had managed to hold himself in a tight ball for most of the kicking, for a lot of the beating before. "I didn't tell him." A note of displeasure or disbelief in Will's voice and he turns enough to see Hannibal again. He shrugs. "I doubt he would have believed me if I had but... I never did."

Hannibal isn't certain, in the light of day, what he thought would happen. That Mason would fall asleep perhaps, send Will to lay on the floor - unnoticing of the remnants of himself that Hannibal left spread against the boy's thighs. That Will would be able to clean himself before being so at risk.

I obeyed.

Wide hands run hot against Will's sides, a careful palpation that draws a little sound from the boy, high and pained. Hannibal gentles further still, to ensure that no bones have been broken, at least overtly enough to feel by touch, and then rubs a hand softly against the small of Will's back.

Mason had sense enough, at least, not to strike there, where the wrong end of the belt could have paralyzed the boy, but it is hardly enough to assuage the fishhooks snagged and tearing in Hannibal's skin.

"Water," Hannibal offers softly. "A pipe."

Will is trembling again, from exhaustion and pain both, before nodding to both. He feels Hannibal get up from the sofa and sighs, burying his face against his arms still folded on the arm of the sofa. When Hannibal returns it is with a soft stroke of fingers through Will’s hair.

"Sit up for me."

Will protests, a fussiness Hannibal rarely sees in him, and he soothes Will gently until he can coax him to obey.

"You'll choke," Hannibal explains softly as he helps Will take a sip of water, another. Cool and clean, still surprising here, in London, but always consistent. He gestures that he wants no more, and Hannibal sets it away, offers Will the pipe instead.

Will has used so often, now, that it takes a lot more than a few deep breaths to take the edge off. He smokes, and finds himself leaning against Hannibal where he sits next to him, still touching Will softly, over and over. He turns his head to exhale smoke against Hannibal's shoulder.

"Do you have to go?" he whispers, and Will hates that he sounds so stupidly young, so naively needy.

Attention trained on the stairs, Hannibal slips an arm across the boy's shoulders when Will slumps small against him.

"Soon," he says, but the reluctance in his voice is manifested into the way his hand curls through Will's hair to bring the boy nearer still. It tugs at Hannibal, aches in him, to feel the boy so pained beside him, and that pull winds tighter in increments to think that Mason has made these marks, rather than Hannibal.

The thoughts are set aside, unclear and unfamiliar, and Hannibal decides that he will sift through them later, when his head is clearer.

He resists the urge to ask Will again what was said, and more importantly, what was told. *I didn't tell him* but the older boy now knows that something happened, and laid the blame for it at the feet - and across the sweet, fragile skin - of the boy aside Hannibal now.

"Mason will be paranoid," Hannibal warns Will, though he doesn't doubt the boy already knows. "Looking not towards suspects but towards you - if you are who they desire, they will find their way to you, and he will not have to search them out."

He tracks the movement of one of the little urchins, but knows they won't speak. Allegiance is easily bought, here, and Hannibal reminds himself to stop for pies for them later.

"An unfair game," Hannibal decides, turning his nose into Will's hair and sighing, "with unintended consequences." The words are thick as he says them, unpleasant as the bitterness of ash. "We will play it no more."

Will slumps a little further, shifts to suck more smoke into his lungs and exhales slowly, coughing at the end for holding the breath too long.

"And what do you intend to do instead?" Will asks softly, humming and shifting enough to rest his head on Hannibal's lap, his legs over the arm of the chair as his eyes droop in need of rest but his body fights it.

"You can't let me go, you would have otherwise." He swallows, feeling the tightness in his chest at the very thought of stopping this. Despite his fear, his worry, he waits for Hannibal to take him, every night he knows the man is there. He cannot imagine that ending, going away.

Will smokes more, arching his body and exhaling until he drops the thing to the floor and nuzzles almost fiercely against Hannibal.

Hannibal doesn't tell the boy - arms settling loosely around him - that it is less a matter of *can't* than *won't*. Certainly he is capable of resistance, of an exercise in willpower, to ignore the boy's presence here, push him aside if he comes near, keep his own distance besides. There is little that Hannibal is unable to do, when the steel clamp of his mind resolves upon it, but the little sound he feels pressed against his chest, the small body coiling closer to his own, weakens him.

He hums a note of displeasure, at himself rather than the boy, and at the thought that he would relinquish something so particularly lovely to be destroyed wholesale by the spoiled brat upstairs who could never hope to appreciate such a fascinating creature as this.

"It would easier for you if I did," Hannibal suggests, withholding the note of reluctance from his voice, training it to a practiced neutrality.

Will groans softly and turns his eyes up to the man he rests against.

"I have you to thank for these," he murmurs, enough accusation in his words to feel, but to cut. Will pushes himself to sit up further, winces, small sounds accompanying the motion until he's kneeling, can press his forehead against Hannibal's shoulder. "The least you can do is stay to watch me die or heal."

It's meant in jest, the former, though Will wonders how much of the night before Mason remembers, how hard Will will suffer if he remembers everything.

He turns his head to kiss softly against Hannibal's throat, feel the warm fingers in his hair.

"You have no interest in those things that are *easy* for you to acquire. Nor do I."

Hannibal's eyes drift closed at the truth in the boy's words, moreso at the honesty of his affection, trailed against his neck with quiet sighs.

"I understand now," the man replies in French, lest little ears overhear them. "You are mad."

Humming against him, Will doesn't argue the point, and Hannibal tucks a finger beneath Will's chin to lift it, and bring their eyes to meet.

"He will kill you," murmurs Hannibal, less a statement to incite fear, and more one of simple fact. "He did not for this, but his ire is raised. Paranoia - anger - may drive his hand until he does not stop. Boredom, when one day he awakens and decides he no longer wishes you to

exist. His moods will shift and you will be killed merely for your presence here. It is his way, it has always been."

Hannibal studies Will's eyes, pupils wide from the resin, but lucid, listening.

"Why do you not run, foolish boy? Now. Now when you are clothed and he is asleep."

Will considers, carefully turns his head to feel Hannibal's fingers slip from him.

"Why do you think?" He responds softly, says nothing more.

He kisses Hannibal's throat again, up to his jaw, exhausted body feeling lighter from the smoke, the pain dulled by it. Will slips one leg over Hannibal's thighs and straddles him, finally arching up enough to kiss the corner of Hannibal's mouth.

There is nothing for him to run to. No reason to beyond the immediate need to live. But his school will not take him, his parents will disown him, and in the streets he would quickly starve or freeze.

Will presses closer, sits against Hannibal fully and rests his head against the man's chest, open, vulnerable, little. The way Hannibal always wants him, the way Will cannot help being.

Lifting his chin for Will to nuzzle beneath it, Hannibal rests his cheek against the boy's hair, strong arms secured around him. It is comfortable, to the man's surprise, the quiet and the darkness, and the need he normally feels to take this boy, pin him down and possess him, does not fill him now. It is another kind of intimacy, unfamiliar to Hannibal, to enjoy such nearness as this, and so genuinely.

A stillness settles into them both, as he warms the boy's body with his own, careful only to touch tenderly as he soothes any lingering tension from Will's back that the vapors themselves did not already ease.

Finally, he speaks, as quietly as he may, to let the quiet linger.

"Then you are in my charge," decides Hannibal. "You are mine, and not only for the plucking. When I cannot intercede on him, I will do what I can to slow him, still his hand when I may, distract and divert. You will tell me when you are in need of something, and I will secure it for you as best I may." Brow furrowed, troubled by the realization of his own ardent claim and how sincerely he means it, Hannibal whispers against Will's hair. "Will you let me?"

Sighing, Will squirms comfortably before settling. It would be easy to agree, to allow that claim and take everything that came with it. No more chances to deny the man when he wanted to take his pleasure of him, no more chances to fight and say no. He would be owned, as surely as he is now, but by a man he seeks out on his own. Tempts and teases into a claim.

Will supposes it is easy.

"Will you let me recover?" he asks, smiling, tilting his head again to nuzzle behind Hannibal's ear. "Before you snare me again?"

A rumble of approval from the man, like the purr of a great cat.

“This time,” he agrees, tilting their cheeks together, noses brushing, before finally catching Will’s mouth beneath his own. “If you will tell me of what you are in need, and let me bring it to you.”

A rustle of movement snaps his attention away from the boy, but it’s only one of the orphans, clambering up onto a couch. Hannibal reminds himself to bring extra candy, as well as the pies, tomorrow to ensure their silence about this.

He settles further into the couch to let Will lay against his chest. The boy weighs little, and less than he did the first time Hannibal snatched him up to pin him against a wall. He follows the ridges of Will’s spine with his fingertips, could count each and every one if he wished it, and resolves to include Will diligently in the list of those he feeds on his visits.

“You are doing a good deed,” Hannibal considers, hopes that perhaps it will ease the pain when the bruises flourish again past the haze of smoke that clouds them now. “In your suffering, beautiful as it is, you have distracted him entirely from the others.” His brows draw in, the only indication of a profound displeasure darkened inside. “I do not recall the last time I have seen the same boys here for so long, and so untouched as this.”

Will hums, brings one arm down to curl around Hannibal’s shoulders, the other up to rest his head against, eyes hooded and sleepy but still watching Hannibal carefully. It’s both amusing and oddly endearing that he cares about the boys enough to even notice them. Will has found that few people do. They come and go, taking coats and bringing pipes, and in the morning are hidden in the far creases of the sofas as if they don’t exist.

He never sees them fed, never sees them allowed to leave.

He swallows.

Will had considered why else the boys were here, but he had never allowed himself to linger on the thought.

He banishes the thought again, allows the praise to settle against his skin before addressing Hannibal’s earlier words.

“I want to sleep,” he sighs, warm, smiling, before tilting his head a little and blinking slowly up at Hannibal. “I want you to touch me.” He grins, “Gently, very, very gently. I always sleep so well after you touch me…”

Hannibal considers the request, attention drifting towards the stairs again. There is no movement in the den now but them, no tell-tale creak of floorboards that would warn him of Mason stirring above. He considers the boy, sprawled lazy-limbed across his lap, and the coy smile that greets him when their eyes meet again.

He will not deny him.

Can not, in truth.

“Dreadful boy,” murmurs Hannibal, relenting to Will’s sweet demands of him, and he brings his hands to hold Will’s smooth cheeks within them, heat against heat, to lean nearer and kiss the flush that blossoms beautifully across his nose, beneath his eyes, down to meet his lips. A slip sideways, slow, to lay back along the couch and let a leg dangle from it, with Will spread atop him.

“You will cost me a fortune in sweets to silence them,” he mutters, rueful and pleased all at once, although Hannibal knows with certainty that none of the little ones will go to Mason willingly, would only relinquish information to him if it meant saving themselves from a threat that - thanks to the writhing boy laying against him - no longer seems imminent.

“Tell me,” Hannibal continues, glasses skewing when Will nuzzles his cheek. “Show me what you want of me.”

Will smiles, adjusts to rest comfortably on his stomach before drawing his knees up enough to raise his hips, to rest over Hannibal on all fours in a surprisingly innocent but no less tempting position. With one hand he seeks out Hannibal’s, brings it to his face to gently bite the fingertips before sliding it further down to press between his legs.

Will presses his lips together with a soft sound and presses his hand against Hannibal’s to tighten it against him, to start a gentle rhythm of rubbing there.

“Just like this,” he sighs, bites his lip and lets it go just as quickly, opening his eyes to see Hannibal properly. “Tease me till I cum,” Will grins, shivers pleasantly before pushing himself up a little more, pressing closer to Hannibal to whisper, “and you, don’t. For this, for what you did to me.” It’s demanding, insolent, and Will relishes in the way Hannibal tenses beneath him before Will continues. “Think of next time,” he purrs, voice already softening and lilting with how he’s being stroked now. “Think of how you’ll take me, strike me for my insolent words, take your pleasure and leave me dripping… think of it.”

“Spoiled,” snarls Hannibal softly, scarcely able to restrain himself from acting out against Will now, immediately, delighting in the sting of Will’s cheek beneath his hand, the shocked little sound the boy makes when he slaps him for his misbehavior. He resists, this time, and instead curls his free hand into Will’s hair to tug, just enough for the boy to feel it, to give Hannibal some sense of control again.

He rubs in counterpoint to the undulations of the boy’s hips, twisting downward against him, a friction between the coarse material of the trousers, Will’s cock already hardening. Decidedly, Hannibal does not slip his hand between the fabric and bare skin, leaves him buttoned to feel the way the material stretches over the boy’s bulge, pulling tight against him.

“Will you cum for me?” asks Hannibal. Arching Will’s neck into a slightly deeper bend, to bring their eyes to meet again through the curls of hair that fall in front of brilliant blue eyes, Hannibal’s brows lift in interest, fascinated by the way Will’s lips unfurl on a sigh.

It feels good, the best slow draw of pleasure, the friction maddening and divine. Will arches deeper, presses nails into the sofa next to Hannibal’s arms where they rest.

“More,” he moans softly, ducks his head, delights in the sharp tug to bring it back up so Hannibal can see him. “Harder, Hannibal, please.”

He shivers, sounds growing more frequent but still soft as he’s granted his request. Will lets his legs slide wider, closes his eyes but knows that his cheeks are flushing darker, from being observed and touched and held.

“God,” Will breathes, bites his lip, releases it, brows drawing closer. “Do you think of me? Like this?” he sighs. “When you’re alone? When he has me?”

The questions snare in Hannibal’s chest, wind between his ribs and wrap invasive as vines against weather-weakened trellises, a persistent and undeniable force that in their patience threaten to pull him to pieces.

“Yes,” admits Hannibal, no more volume in his voice than a sigh. “A longing, when I am alone, to feel you pinned against me. A hunger, ravenous, to push your mouth to mine when I cannot touch you here.” The man swallows roughly, and curls his fingers against the hardness of Will’s cock, stroking firmly through his trousers. “A fury, blinding, when he has you and I do not,” Hannibal sighs, a quaking in the sound, restrained to merely that from the tremor he feels shuddering inside his own chest. “I think of you often. Constantly. As you are now and as you were against the wall, on your toes to kiss me or splayed across a couch as if you were an odalisque.”

Unable to resist, he drags his fingers up enough to slip them down inside the boy’s pants, mouth slack in sympathy to the moan that he watches drip from Will’s lips, sweeter than honey.

“Does it please you to know how you have so intoxicated me, cruel boy?” he snarls, a threat that does not see realization even as Hannibal curves his lips against Will’s throat.

“Yes,” a whimper, a whine, and Will’s lips part and quirk up at the corners into a smile as he spreads his thighs wider still and rocks harder against Hannibal’s hand.

“Hannibal -”

The torment doesn’t end so quickly, so easily. Hannibal keeps his clever fingers against Will’s cock until the boy is shaking above him, sighing sweet moans against his ear, sweet pleas and high little cries.

Will forces his eyes open, to look, to see the man beneath him, leans closer, against the painful strain of his hair being yanked back, to kiss him, just a brush of lips, before his own part and he keens.

“Please, Hannibal, please.”

Hannibal arches up against the boy, grinning sudden and savage when Will manages to twist his hips away, preventing even a brush of Hannibal’s hips against his own. Releasing his hair, he instead catches Will by the jaw, restraining himself from driving his fingernails into the softness of his cheeks, and brings their mouths together.

“You are a terror to me,” he breathes, his words doing nothing to conceal the tenor of his adoration. “Wretched boy.”

The kiss in which they enmesh is smothering and deep, and in it, as their lips and tongues slide smoothly together, Hannibal releases the grip beneath the head of Will’s cock, to swallow down the gasp that shakes free of his little body when he releases, sudden wet heat, pulsing against Hannibal’s fingertips. Even still, he doesn’t slow his rhythm, stroking Will until every drop is milked from him, taken, dripping from Hannibal’s hand to fall damp against his own shirt.

Will whimpers, a pained sound, shivers hard until Hannibal lets him go. Sensitive, spent, Will almost falls against Hannibal to kiss him again, in a sloppy, delighted way.

“Your wretched boy,” he reminds him, sleepy and pleased as he kisses his way down Hannibal’s jaw to his neck and tries to settle against the man as he is, whining when he’s not allowed.

“But -”

“You made a mess, Will,” Hannibal tells him gently, and Will hums, eyes barely open before licking his lips open and blinking at Hannibal in mild, playful implication. “I will not take responsibility for your indiscretions twice,” he adds, a slight narrowing to his eyes.

But he is warm, even still, what passes for teasing perhaps from a man so entirely serious, and kisses are scattered across Will’s face as Hannibal slowly extricates his hand from where it presses sticky and warm against Will’s skin. Hannibal lifts it, stretches his fingers to examine the pearlescent substance pull between them, skimming down his palm. With eyes on Will, a marked hunger shining bright in them, Hannibal draws a finger into his mouth to taste the boy spread across it, savor the salty bitter taste of him as though it were the rarest delicacy.

And, satisfied by the flavor of Will renewed against his tongue, Hannibal returns it to Will, a brow lifting expectantly.

Will sucks his fingers clean in the most obscene way he can. Moans and curls of his tongue, gentle skims of teeth and the most exquisite pressure. When he’s finished he deliberately turns his face against Hannibal’s clean hand and settles to rest on his chest. His breathing slows quickly to rest, and his lips fall slack from their small smile. Will looks so much younger, when he sleeps, the bags stark under his eyes from the days he hadn’t slept at all.

With a sigh, feeling Will grow lax across him, Hannibal lets himself settle as well, enough, for now. He remains attentive, towards any movement or sound that would indicate a need to move, threading his fingers contentedly through Will’s hair and allowing a faint smile, unseen, at the little sounds the boy makes in sleep against him.

For several minutes, Hannibal considers taking him. Easing his own hardness by turning the boy onto his belly and hushing him, until he too is relieved.

He does not.

Rather, he remains where he is. It is warm, beneath Will, warmer than merely the heat exchanged between their bodies. It isn't until after time unknown has passed, and Hannibal finally hears the bedsprings above them squeak with movement, that Hannibal must unsettle himself from beneath the boy who hardly stirs as he does.

His touch lingers long in Will's hair, before he smooths it from his face one last time, and tucks a curl behind his ear, leaving the boy with whom he'd rather stay, to tend to the other.

Entertainment

Chapter Summary

> "It's not *good* for me, Hannibal, all this *stress*," sighs Mason, avoiding the issues of a new distributor, their current distributor, and personal responsibility entirely. "It's begun to *affect* me, can you *imagine*?" Mason slumps back into the couch even further, nearly sending Will to the floor as he sprawls into a deep slouch, lips thinned in annoyance.
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> "*Physically*," grimaces the older boy, shoving his fingers back through Will's hair and pushing it into his face, gloved hand draped across his face. Peeking through Mason's fingers where they've fallen, Will meets Hannibal's eyes and grins. "Do you understand? Hannibal, I can't even *enjoy* myself right now. And *this*," Mason snaps, hand tightening to jerk Will's face towards his own, "is *sorely* in need of some enjoyment."

It takes several days for Will to be able to move without crying out in pain. Mason seems not to notice beyond how easily he can draw tears from Will in this state. Whether he remembers how Will had earned the beating is unclear, he never speaks of it, and he does not raise a hand unnecessarily - by his thoughts - against the boy.

Surprisingly, whatever Mason had gotten into his mind regarding the boy after nearly beating him to death has manifested as a disturbing mixture of wanting to keep Will close and wanting to test his apparently lagging loyalty. Will has found himself foisted on more clients, observed the entire time for behavior that would not benefit Mason himself, he has found himself, also, with his head on Mason's lap as he and Hannibal sit on opposite couches and discuss the day's taking's.

Hannibal does not put Will at risk as often as before, if Will finds himself pinned to a wall now it is to be fed pills that make him sleepy and miraculously take the pain away, or foul-smelling liquid poured down his throat that makes him gag but has the same effect. More often than not, now, Will finds himself present at Mason's meetings with Hannibal. Over breakfasts, over late suppers, over things that are nothing beyond the three of them sharing a space, Mason speaking, Hannibal listening, and Will trying to stay out of shouting range.

"He'll be outside," Mason drawls, bringing a cigarette to his lips and flicking the lighter over and over until the spark takes. "Always so *polite* to wait there until the den is closed up."

Will goes without a word, arms up around himself to keep the cold at bay as he shoulders past the last of the patrons and makes his way to the main door. Another show of trust, of

course, this. Giving Will the cold breath of freedom and knowing he won't run.

Outside, Hannibal is similarly smoking, leaning against the wall with a hand up against his eyes, glasses slightly askew.

"Mason said he," Will gestures, head down, eyes down, blush already crawling up his cheeks at the thought that he would be in the same room with Hannibal, again, and not be allowed to touch him, not be allowed to do more than bring the man a drink and enjoy the brush of his fingers when he takes it.

His brow lifts in response to the boy's fading words, and he exhales long enough that the smoke becomes a cloud of breath instead. "Said he...?" prompts Hannibal.

"I don't know," Will sulks, slumping against the wall. "What does he ever fu-... say?"

Raising his chin, Hannibal hums disapproval at Will - for his attitude, his language, posture, lack of a coat, countless things which altogether strike him, as ever, as an unseemly way to handle such a potentially beautiful creature. Would that he might lash the boy for his tongue, strap him into braces to right his spine, wrap Will in his coat and keep the chill from his skin.

Would that he might.

Would that the streets were not equally as full of prying eyes as the den.

But assured of their own relative solitude, whomever may be near in the shadows, Hannibal offers his cigarette to Will. At least in this way, their lips have met, Hannibal considers ruefully.

"Why then did he send you out here? The couches have not yet been emptied and the snow is worsened."

"Perhaps he hopes I will freeze to death," Will sighs, smoke directed up towards the window overlooking the street, the one Will knows the view from so well now. "Save him the trouble later."

For a moment he stands as he is, eyes up and cigarette ash hanging precariously on the end of the thing before he finally flicks it clear. He wants nothing more than to run, to press himself against Hannibal and kiss him until he loses his breath, and then run. Hope Hannibal finds him before someone of Mason's choosing does.

"He's in the side room," Will murmurs. "I assume he wants another report. He's barely conscious with what he's had today, you might want to be fast before he loses even that level of coherence."

At that, Will's lips quirk a little, eyes flicking just barely to Hannibal before he returns the cigarette and turns to go.

Days and days and days since he has had the man's hands on him for longer than to check for broken bones or fever. He misses them. He wants them. Will lingers in the doorway just enough for Hannibal to set a palm against his lower back to move him further into the den.

Hannibal curls his fingertips, strokes his thumb once, just something - anything - to share between them, before giving the boy a playful shove forward.

“Bring a bottle to us,” Hannibal instructs Will, without glancing back at him as he picks his way through the den. A pause, to loom over a gentleman - it’s all Hannibal can do not to snort at just the thought of it - who he knows to have been there for far longer than is worth the amount of money he spent. He lingers, silent, a dark and broad-shouldered figure, until the man cottons to Hannibal’s unspoken message and makes a quick exit.

He finds Mason, as predicted, in a state of discontent, gloved fingers pressed between his lips and brow furrowed. His eyes are hidden by the reflection of the fire in his glasses, which bodes little better for Hannibal than he was already braced to accept. Skipping small-talk and platitudes, Hannibal settles into the couch across from his ostensible partner, and asks simply, “What’s wrong, Mason?”

A brief motion, enough to displace the fire from Mason’s eyes, replace it with dark bags and an exhausted sort of mania.

"It's as though the money is slipping, Hannibal," Mason says, tone somewhat calm for the moment before he spreads his hands and leans back further into his seat. "Like water. Trickling down and down and down and yet no poppies grow from it, why is that?"

The door opens to admit Will and two glasses held around a bottle of wine. He sets all three to the small table and makes his way to Mason’s couch, curling up on one end of it, watching the two. Mason does not seem to notice.

"The Turks are growing antsy, Hannibal, I don't like it. I don’t trust it."

Though Hannibal does not seemingly pay the boy any more attention than Mason, he sees him, peripherally, watches as he tugs at the sleeves of his shirt and pulls his legs up closer to his chest.

Making himself smaller, in increments, in drawing back from Mason, but at the same time presenting a particular view for Hannibal, with his knees nearly to his shoulders.

“What about them do you not trust, Mason?”

The older boy picks at the seam in the couch and squints towards Hannibal. “They’re all acting nervous.”

“As are you,” Hannibal reminds him, leaning over to pour each a glass of wine. “A vicious cycle, one pressing into the other, again and again.”

"Not *everything* can be my *fault*, Hannibal," Mason says, almost pouting as he reaches to take the glass. He takes a drink, long, relished, before leaning back and rubbing his eyes again. When he drops his hand he seems to finally see Will.

"Puppies should not sit on the furniture,” he mumbles, but does little to actively upset the boy to the floor beyond emphatically pointing, then he looks at Hannibal again.

"I cannot be expected to remain *collected* when there is so much tension. Clients come here, they like it, the company, the product, *him*." He gestures towards Will again as the boy sets his head against Mason's thigh and keeps his eyes tethered to Hannibal. Mason drops a hand heavily into Will's hair and tugs it enough to straighten out the curls. "When is the new product coming? From that *woman* who you claim to know so well?"

"It will do little to hold the trust of the Turks, Mason," Hannibal comments, watches Mason fist Will's hair enough to lift the boy's head before returning to just stroking it. Will bites his lip, turns to nuzzle against Mason as his eyes remain on Hannibal, as he parts his lips as though enjoying the treatment.

He is a wretched child, and Hannibal spares him no more than a passing glance over the rim of his glass before settling his eyes back on Mason and the terse, uniform strokes he settles into.

"It's not *good* for me, Hannibal, all this *stress*," sighs Mason, avoiding the issues of a new distributor, their current distributor, and personal responsibility entirely. "It's begun to *affect* me, can you *imagine*?" Mason slumps back into the couch even further, nearly sending Will to the floor as he sprawls into a deep slouch, lips thinned in annoyance.

A breath is drawn, and it takes every fiber of his being for Hannibal not to sigh it aggressively back out again. "Affect you how?"

"*Physically*," grimaces the older boy, shoving his fingers back through Will's hair and pushing it into his face, gloved hand draped across his face. Peeking through Mason's fingers where they've fallen, Will meets Hannibal's eyes and grins. "Do you understand? Hannibal, I can't even *enjoy* myself right now. And *this*," Mason snaps, hand tightening to jerk Will's face towards his own, "is *sorely* in need of some enjoyment."

Will makes a soft sound, eyes trained on Mason, flicking quickly between his before he leans further despite the pressure against his hair and almost nuzzles against Mason's face. The older boy pulls back in displeasure and directs Will down again.

"Look at it. Look. It's becoming affectionate. I need to remind it why it's here and I *can't*."

Will bites back a grin as he looks at Hannibal from Mason's lap again. Mason splays his fingers through Will's hair and grips it.

"I hate waste, Hannibal. You know I cannot abide it." Mason finishes his wine with a low sound, fiddling with the glass as Will continues writhing against him, a teasing, coy little thing. Mason directs his eyes down, brows furrowed in his irritation, but something flickering behind them that suggests Mason's usual delight in depravity.

"Stop it, Will. *Stop*." A slap against Will's cheek enough to startle, not hurt, and the boy, obliges, turning to lie on his back, directing wide eyes to the man who claims to be his master. Mason tugs Will's hair again, clicks his tongue before looking at Hannibal, considering, almost as though asking him how to deal with such a thing.

"You do it," he finally whines, head tilted, almost imploring. "Strip him and play with him so I can watch. I want to see him squirm."

Will's eyes widen, lips barely parted, enough for Mason to assume the expression is one of displeasure, confusion, when it is anything but.

"Don't *do* that, puppy. You're here for *me*. To please *me*. And I am not pleased. I am tired. And since *I* can't satisfy myself on you, I want you to bend over for Hannibal to take what he gives you." He glances up to Hannibal again. "Beat him, spread him, he can take it."

Will's eyes alight on Hannibal briefly, he swallows, before Mason bends his head back, stretching his neck.

"Make him cry for me. He looks so good in tears." Another slap to Will's cheek. "Go."

"Mason," Hannibal begins.

"Hannibal."

A blink, as the older boy interjects, and Hannibal raises a hand in Will's direction when he begins to uncoil himself from the couch. "Is he not yours?" Hannibal challenges softly, a careful deflection from a precarious - though desirable - position. "It is unfair, to a puppy in training, to expect them to follow different voices of authority. It makes them," he pauses, "confused, as to who their master truly is."

Will is finally forced to his feet when Mason suddenly sits forward, elbows on his knees. "Are there?" he asks. "Different *voices* of *authority*? Are there, Hannibal?"

A thin smile appears, as Hannibal regards him, palm still held facing Will. "He may think there are, if you insist on seeing this through. I simply wish to prevent potential iss-"

"Hannibal," groans Mason, throwing himself back to slump against the couch again. "Hannibal, Hannibal, *Hannibal*, are you saying *no*?"

A breath, sustained between the three of them, the air nearly electric with the perception of challenge within it, and Will held in the center by the two polarities, standing still between the couches.

"Whatever you wish, Mason," intones Hannibal, and at this, finally, the tension breaks with a clap and a laugh from the wild-eyed blonde.

"Wonderful, *god*," he sighs, watching as Will makes his way towards Hannibal. "You're just so *righteous* aren't you? Baffling, really, a *conundrum* considering your personal *predilections*."

Although his expression does not shift enough to be noticed by the cocaine-addled madman gathering himself into his coat in delight, Will can see the flicker of movement beneath Hannibal's eyes - the barest narrowing, what little could not be restrained - at the thinly-veiled threat.

Will isn't far from Hannibal when he reaches forward to touch him, fingers splayed as though this is not the hundredth time he has touched this man, felt his skin and lips and teeth. He touches against his shirt, steps closer and lets out a soft breath. Head turned enough for Mason not to see, Will grins.

His body language curls, becomes the little needy thing that Mason so adores seeing, stretching, beating in his bed. With careful motions he shifts to straddle Hannibal, lip between his teeth, eyes bright with mischief and pleasure.

"Turn him around." Mason drawls, and Will feels the familiar sensation of being so easily grabbed, so easily lifted and manhandled. Mason, he finds, watches with a frighteningly hungry expression, gloved fingers against his lips as Hannibal slips Will closer back against him.

"Strip him."

The tension in Hannibal's body is tangible when he leaves his hands to rest against Will's waist, tightness through his chest and down into his legs across which Will straddles, on his knees. The man's sharpened gaze skims across Mason once more before he ducks his head, as though fumbling with the buttons on Will's shirt, and unseen, he grazes a kiss against Will's shoulder.

"Not like *that*," hisses Mason, and for a moment Will shares the tension with the man beneath him, until it becomes apparent that the gentle press of lips was hidden. "I said *strip* him, Hannibal, please do not make me come over there."

"Oh?"

It's softly spoken, but direly felt, as Hannibal lets his simple intonation hang and smiles readily towards Mason. The older boy's eyes pull narrow, as if he's about to make good on whatever he thinks he might do once he drags himself off the couch, but merely laughs, instead.

"Oh, you," he grins, wagging a finger at Hannibal. "No, *really* though, come on. Let's make this a little lively, get the blood *flowing*. Although it doesn't surprise me that you'd be every bit as staid and stern and *boring* as you can be normally."

A hum is Hannibal's only audible response, but he continues working the buttons free on Will's shirt, and slides a hand across his bared chest, fingers strumming across a peaked nipple before slipping lower. He rubs a thumb over the fine hairs on the boy's belly - a tender gesture, unnoticed or uncared about by Mason - until he reaches the waistband of Will's pants and begins to tug those buttons free as well.

He grasps Will's thigh with his other hand, and lifts his chin to regard the youthful beauty perched in his lap. "I'm afraid that it will be difficult to compare my own abilities to Mason's," murmurs Hannibal. "I do know how deeply you care about pleasing your master."

Will's lips part, eyes hooded as he keeps them on Mason in front of him. Then, carefully, he nods.

"Yes," he sighs, swallowing as Hannibal lifts him to work his pants free from his legs, lets the fabric drop to the floor. He returns against the man, folding his legs up against the couch so he is kneeling over Hannibal's thighs, entirely bared for Mason to see, for Hannibal to feel.

Despite their closeness, this permission, Will has never felt Hannibal so tense behind him. Never so hard when he was not actively pinning Will for his own depraved need. Will feels entirely helpless to him, feels his heart pound for fear of repercussions for this, for when Mason breaks from his stupor and realizes... *sees*.

"Mason -" It's a soft thing, almost imploring, before Hannibal grasps his hair and tilts Will's head back, bares him fully, vulnerable, pale and helpless.

"He sounds so *good* when he says my name." Mason sighs, reaching to pull another cigarette from his silver case. "Such a good puppy, most days. Always willing. You should enjoy him, while I let you. The boy is *shockingly* responsive."

Hannibal doesn't look towards the chattering boy again, allowing - now that he is allowed - himself to have only for the one in his lap.

"Perhaps I should," agrees Hannibal softly, "enjoy him while I can."

Tugging Will's head back further still, enough to rend a startled sound from him, Hannibal sucks a kiss against Will's neck. The boy rises onto his knees, breath coming shorter - from the sudden sharp sensation of it, pain and pleasure mingling - and Hannibal brings his hand back to Will's chest to curl his nails against it, to feel the quickened rise and fall, to pull rough against his skin and leave marks over his heart.

"There you *go*!" exclaims Mason with a delirious delight, clapping his gloved hands loudly, once, with a burst of laughter. "That's the right attitude, Hannibal," he grins, laughter dying down, until the corners of his lips twist from his smile downward, just a little. "Make him hurt."

Already Hannibal has stopped hearing Mason, a lentando brought just to the a softness - like the fall of rain, the rustle of leaves - that if the older boy said his name, he would hear it, but little more is noticed.

"Where should I touch you?" Hannibal murmurs, a soft French pressed against the boy's bare shoulder. He kisses more openly now, eyes closing to block out even the sight of Mason, to simply taste the warmth of rosy color that heats Will's pale, bruised body.

He will do only the minimum that Mason asks, he will pillage the boy, but on his own terms. Hurt him, by his own devices. Hannibal knows not if Mason has already had him today, already had his way with fists and teeth and cock, though Hannibal is curious at his own relief to not see new bruises laid livid in Will's skin.

Will moans softly, struggles still against the touches enough to satisfy Mason's pride, but every motion brings him back against Hannibal's cock, every motion bends his body in ways he knows Hannibal adores. He can't reply, not without drawing attention and anger. But he shows him.

Twists enough to bring Hannibal's hands to his side, lower, forces him to grasp his thigh hard when he seems likely to wriggle from his lap. It becomes an unspoken symphony, gasps and whimpers, twists and arches, until, without warning, Hannibal brings his palm hard against Will's face and settles him to trembling stillness for just a moment.

"Disobedient thing," Hannibal whispers, smiling against Will's skin, feeling the heat of it he knows so well. "Listen to your master."

Will pants, raises desperate eyes to Mason, as though genuinely in distress, reaches just briefly before Hannibal snares his hand and brings it behind his back, as though to restrain, but really just pressing those slender fingers against his cock until Will gasps.

"You're not my master," he whimpers, turning his head as though to address Hannibal, enough, even, to feel the man's ire at the statement, bracing for another strike.

Hannibal cannot, for that statement, not now with Mason watching eagerly from over the rim of his wine glass, but instead digs his thumb into the boy's wrist. He yelps at the spark of pain that runs numbing up his arm from the pressure point, and Mason's grin widens as the cry rises into a quaking laugh.

Will's fingers curl as best he can, to rub his fingertips against the bulge in Hannibal's pants.

"Will," snaps Mason. "Do not *sass* Hannibal. Do *not* or this will be much *worse* for you than it's already going to be. You do what *Hannibal* says, just like you do what *I* say." He grins, and swirls his wine. "Hannibal's capable of all *kinds* of terrible thi-"

"Mason. Enough." Hand against Will's throat, Hannibal ceases the undulations of their bodies together to stare down the blonde across from them. "I am doing as you asked. If you wish to punish him, then by all means, feel free to do so. I am not your dog, and you will not raise you hand to me, in words or actions."

The room all but rings with the impact of his words, however quietly he spoke them, until Mason snorts and holds his hand up in surrender. "*Touchy*."

Will trembles, not from the words but from the desperate need to feel Hannibal against him again. He jerks, just once, and finds himself bent forward almost in half where he sits, the hand against his throat slipping to grasp his hair again.

"You will listen to me," Hannibal repeats, almost meditative, and Will nods as much as he can, held the way he is.

Before them, Mason regards the boy, always a beautifully bendy specimen, he has had Will's legs up against his ears before, has had him stretched and splayed so far his entire body shook with it. And now he watches Hannibal twist that beautiful body in his large hands, watches the way Will does not seem to flinch from even the harshest touches.

"Spread your legs," Hannibal says, rough tone and low voice, allowing Will to sit back against him again to obey. "With your hands."

Will does, cheeks red with humiliation and need, cock already hard between his legs at being so commanded, so touched. He sets his palms against the insides of his thighs, scratched up and bruised from Mason's preferred treatment of him, and spreads, back arching with the motion, lip between his teeth as Hannibal strokes along the delicate skin.

With his mouth pressed to the curve of Will's neck, Hannibal murmurs, "Shameless, wanton boy, to spread yourself so readily. Do you bare yourself to anyone, for anyone who asks? If I ask you to spread your backside wide for me, would you?"

"Yes," gasps Will, breath tightening as Hannibal spreads the boy's legs a little further still.

"And you will let me touch you however it pleases me?"

"Y-Yes."

"Do you enjoy this?" Hannibal asks suddenly, nuzzling against Will's cheek hard enough to force the boy to lean, body rigid as he struggles to remain upright and hold his legs spread wide.

Will draws a breath to answer and Hannibal does the same in anticipation for the answer, when Mason interjects sharply, "He isn't supposed to be *enjoying* it, Hannibal. *God*, just - bend him over or hit him again or put your fist in him."

"Aren't you curious?" Hannibal asks, turning dark eyes to Mason again, thumbs caressing against Will's thin skin, tracing the arteries he knows run there. "If he enjoys the abuse inflicted on him?"

Sharp nails dig against Will thighs and he makes a helpless sound of pain, squirming where Hannibal holds him.

"Why do you think he stays?"

For a moment, Mason remains entirely silent, shockingly so, lips parted and eyes wide before he laughs, a low, rumbling thing that sends Will trembling and Hannibal to finally cup him and stroke Will's cock between rough fingers. The older boy ashes his cigarette, leans forward to take up the wine to fill his glass and keeps his eyes on Will.

"You do like it," he purrs, eyes narrowing as Will just trembles, one hand behind him stroking Hannibal hard, the other still obediently holding himself spread.

"Hit him," Masons says, and Will jerks at the sharp smack against soft skin. "Again."

"Mason -" Hannibal squeezes the reddening skin hard enough to pale it but does not hit Will again.

"He does like it." Mason sounds almost awed, an entirely new discovery about this boy he so often aims to destroy and never manages.

Hannibal's easy smile does nothing to betray the vicious coil in his belly - for vengeance against this stupid boy, for possession of the beautiful one in his lap, a ravening desire for

everything all at once. He bites a mark into Will's shoulder and closes his eyes, envisioning blood, arterial spray from Mason's laughing, gurgling throat, raining against Will's pale skin while Hannibal fucks the boy ragged.

"Bite him *harder*," Mason demands, and in this, Hannibal obliges, pulse rising as the boy's fingers flare shaking against his cock, and curl back again just as quickly. Glad to leave his marks when there is reason for them, happy to let Mason experience what Hannibal does daily in seeing something that is his branded by another.

"Is he bleeding?" asks Mason. "I want to see him bleed."

It requires a tearing, a snap of Hannibal's head to split Will's skin between his teeth, growling softly into the wound as he sucks against it, tongue pressed to scarlet skin hot from abuse.

"You like that, too, don't you," intones Mason, eyes focused on Hannibal for a moment more before he demands, "Fuck him. I want to see it. Open him up for me."

Will is shaking, never before abused in such an animalistic way. He can feel his pulse against the wound, can feel the heat of it, the throbbing ache. He makes a sound close to a sob.

"Would you have me torn apart?" he asks weakly, whines when Hannibal takes both of his hands and presses them against him, snaring his hair with his other hand.

"You like it!" Mason exclaims, genuinely pleased by the notion. "And our Hannibal," he laughs, "oh, he so rarely can let *loose* like this. It's only fair he gets some fun too, he works so *hard*."

Will fumbles long enough to grasp Hannibal properly, to stroke him deliberately hard, beneath the head of his cock until the man breathes a foreign word against Will that he understands by manner of tone alone. Without warning, Will is pushed forward, hands managing to catch the table to hold himself suspended over the floor on all fours.

Damp strands of hair hang over his eyes and Will ducks his head on a whimper, feeling Hannibal spread him wider, bring a hand up to bend his back further until Will is forced to his elbows. A small trickle of blood slips down his arm and he bites his lip.

"Mason, please don't make him -" but his tone is more desperate now, less pleading and lower. He shakes, lifts his eyes to watch Mason.

The air is thick, lightening snapping through dry air before a storm breaks, and mindless now of what Mason may or may not think of it, Hannibal rumbles in French, "Beg me for it."

"Mason," Will whimpers instead, and with little more than a dip into his wine glass, Hannibal presses his fingers - tips breaching - against Will's opening.

"Beg me, Will, not him."

"Please," stutters Will, voice shattered as French falls cracking from his lips and his head bows, trembling between the two men. "Please," he breathes, teeth gritting. "Tear me apart."

Hannibal's dark, sighing laugh is praise enough, but as he twists his fingers into the boy, he adds, "Good boy."

And it's all they have before Mason snares Will by the hair and jerks his head back, a warning finger lifted to Hannibal when the older man considers stopping the cruel push inside the boy. "What did you say?" asks Mason, turning his bright eyes down to Will again, the boy's face nearly pressed against his crotch. "Tell me *now*."

"Oh," Will's eyes flutter, lips parting wider as he scrabbles his hands against the table, arches back, struggles forward...

"He... he told me to beg," Will whimpers, shaking as Hannibal spreads his fingers, strokes around his prostate. "It's... it's why I said your name."

Hannibal rewards his boy with a deep deliberate stroke and relishes the sobbing sound it draws. Mason watches, the way Will's lips part in unmistakable pleasure, the way he rocks his body back against the abuse, seems to entirely open to it, to tense and relax over and over.

"Say it again," Mason hisses, teeth clenched in a wide grin, resting his other hand beneath Will's chin to keep him held at attention towards himself.

Swallowing hard, Will's body trembles with the force of Hannibal spreading his opening wide around his fingers, quick enough to nearly steal the wind from the boy's lungs with the sudden pain of it.

"I told you," repeats Mason, "to say my name again, *puppy*. Should I make you bark? Beat it from you? Carve it into your skin so you *remember*?" Every question tightens his fingernails into Will's reddened cheeks, and the boy shakes his head despite it.

"N-No, Mason," he pleads, tongue parting lips made dry by the speed of his breath. "Mason, please, Mason, let me -"

With a kiss to the curve of the boy's backside, a twist of his fingers, and a forceful curl, Hannibal murmurs in warm French, "My beautiful boy."

It's too much, the words too soft, the French curling and teasing as cruelly as the fingers bend within him, and with a sob he cums.

"Mason," he's shaking, "Mason, oh, I'm sorry, I'm sorry -" The words morph to French, bastardized and mumbled through spit-slick lips. *Please, take me, mark me, break me…*

"Did you just -"

"Yes," sighs Hannibal.

"Not you," Mason sneers, and Hannibal doesn't tell him that his answer wasn't for Mason, either. "*You*. *Puppy*. On my *table*."

The weight of his own erection forgotten for now, Hannibal only grudgingly retrieves his fingers from Will - presses in again just to feel him shiver and quake - and then rubs them

softly around his swollen hole, flushed bright red.

“Mason,” Will gasps, fingers clenching the edge of the table as the force of his orgasm rattles his lithe body with aftershocks. “P-Please, I didn’t mean to -”

Skimming a hand down the curve of Will’s ass, Hannibal blinks at Mason when the boy snaps at him, “Stop touching him, *now*, Hannibal, *now*, stop touching him *now*.” Voice rising in a frantic cadence, the sights and sounds and smells of sex and desire and fear and blood almost too much for him to bear. As if in consideration to tear them from his scalp, Mason’s fingers tighten in Will’s curls, hold, and finally loosen.

“You, upstairs. I will deal with this *disobedience* in a moment.”

Will finds it almost impossible to stand without holding something for balance, legs too long spread, almost numb with the sensation as he reaches for his pants and finds them yanked out of his reach.

"Bare," Mason hisses, and Will bites his lip, face bright with shame, as he regards both Mason, livid and tense, paler than even he usually is, and Hannibal who absently rubs his fingers together, expression a mix of contentment and withheld wrath.

Without another word, Will backs up, careful to get the door open before squeezing through and closing it behind him. There are few patrons left, and every single one of them that is conscious hones in on the naked abused boy. Will barely makes it to the stairs before he has to crawl up them, face and body burning with shame, heart beating too fast anticipating what will happen when the door opens again.

In the silence that follows the boy’s departure, Hannibal reaches for his glass of wine.

"Are you satisfied?" he asks.

Mason laughs, once, a single bursting note of disdain. “Am *I*,” he starts. “Am *I*? Are *you* is the better question, I think.” He steps nearer, hands upheld as if in surrender, and pats them against the man’s broad chest. “Are *you* satisfied, *Hannibal*, *that* is what I want to know.”

“I did only as you asked, Mason,” replies Hannibal. “If you did not wish me to -”

“You did *much* more than what I asked.”

“If you did not wish me to,” Hannibal continues, “then you might have said so.”

Mason’s fingers tighten, just enough to gather the fabric of Hannibal’s shirt beneath them. “I am telling you now, then, Hannibal,” he responds, as calmly as Mason could hope to manage, which is to say, entirely rattled. “I am telling you now that you are not to *touch* my puppy again. *Ever*. Do we have an *understanding*? *Partner*?”

Hannibal resists his own anger, allows the touches against him despite the nearly stifling desire to fling Mason across the room, into the fire, hold him down until the screaming stopped but the twitching didn't.

"You had better find a way for your tensions to pass, *partner*," Hannibal tells him softly. "Something like that?" He nods towards the door, hands down against the couch again. "Is sorely in need of enjoyment."

The words are vicious but quiet.

Mason's eyes narrow.

"Oh, I intend to," he responds, a curious lucidity to the ease of his smile. "Again, and again, and *again*." Mason's fingers spread and he releases Hannibal's shirt to shrug out of his coat, the smile lingering as he adds, "Thanks for getting him warmed up for me."

Hannibal takes a sip of wine, utterly placid, and considers the tool that would work best to split Mason's smile from ear to ear.

"I am feeling a bit better after all," Mason chirps, heading towards the den. "Just what the former-doctor ordered."

Hannibal watches him go, closes his eyes as the door is closed and presses his fingers beneath his glasses.

He can taste Will between his teeth. He can hear the boy's words echoing, trembling on the air. He can smell him.

It is past dawn when Hannibal leaves the den, fingers clasping a cigarette as he takes a match to light it. Outside, the street is cold, empty but for him and the early morning. And the desperate pleas of a young boy carrying from the window above him. Hannibal takes the long way home.

By Proxy

Chapter Summary

> "I hate you," Will spits. "Detest, despise you." And for all his hate, the kiss forced on him is returned with as much fervor. "Cruel," he gasps, digging his nails against Hannibal's shirt, "inhuman, sadistic -" He groans when Hannibal bites under his jaw, a harsh thing, claiming, and feels his entire body shudder in pleasure.
>
> "My insufferable master, I hate you."

"Papa always said that you could tell the quality of animal by their ability to provide."

The declaration, rattling loud in the room, is enough to wake Will from sleep with a cringe.

It isn't as though he's locked in the room, but there are certainly days when leaving it seems like more trouble than it's worth, beyond a trip to the bedpan or maybe a quick stagger downstairs to grab a pipe and some water. Bruises florid along his pale skin, scratches and bites still tacky from the night before, today hasn't yet merited Will troubling to move beyond that.

"Mason," Will groans softly, and the older boy's grin is nearly audible before he even speaks. Still, he clucks his tongue, footfalls light as he approaches the bed, leather-clad fingers walking up the length of Will's spine where he lays face-down into a pillow.

"Animals that cannot provide - assistance, or company, or meat - aren't worth the trouble to keep fed and housed," Mason continues idly. The cold clings to him - he's been outside, and Will could curse for the rarity that opportunity provides that he missed in favor of lying still and licking his wounds.

It's only as Mason's fingers curl in Will's hair, catching the dark locks between them but not yet pulling, that there is a pop from across the room. A match flaring to life, its scent sulfurous, and then acrid as it's shaken out into a thin line of smoke.

"Hannibal and I have been talking," chirps Mason brightly. "About the different things that you could provide me. He has a lot of good ideas, that one - very clever." He folds his hands together and leans low over Will at the head of the bed.

"Can you provide, Will? You don't seem to be doing much of anything today."

Will swallows, eyes open but not yet sitting up, or turning. He lets his mind travel back to the last time he had smelled the strike of a match, the aftermath of it, as he was bent over nearly double and fucked so hard he almost cried, one hand against his mouth to keep him silent in the spare meeting room of the den.

Last night, actually, go fucking figure.

He hums softly and finally turns, arching and stretching into beautiful lines, like a cat. He knows the show is enjoyed, knows the sheets slip further against his stomach as he moves, blinks his eyes open properly and regards them both, flicking between one man and the other.

“Don’t I already?” he asks, sleepy and warm, words gently slurred. He can see Hannibal’s eyes darken at the tone and it makes him smile, bring his lip between his teeth and regard Mason again.

“There goes that mouth of yours,” Mason grins, wagging a finger at Will as he tightens his other hand in the boy’s hair, to pull him up to sitting. “That’s just what we were talking about. You are a clever one.” His tone shifts to a growl as he pulls Will forward further still, ignoring the gasps, the whimpers, to put the boy on his knees.

“How should I have him?”

“That depends,” Hannibal shrugs, sighing smoke upwards. “Do you want it to be easier on him? Less chance of choking that way, or losing control of himself.” It’s delicately worded, but Mason still seems torn and hums a long, considerate note.

“On his back,” Hannibal decides, without a glance towards Will as he wanders closer. Mason tugs his wrist to his hip and beams as Will rolls over for him, sprawled bare across the sheets.

“Good boy,” sighs Mason. “Now, we’re going to try something new. It’s important to me that I maintain only the best animals in my keeping, you understand? Which means that for me to want to provide for you, I expect you in turn to provide for me. And your mouth,” Mason clucks, “I’ve had plenty of times. Don’t get me wrong - you’re very good with it - but I need to experience new things, Will, new stimulation to keep myself alert and interested.”

Hannibal’s brow lifts as finally his eyes glance across Will’s, and there is nothing comforting in the lingering amusement seen in them.

“We were talking about all of this earlier on our walk, and Hannibal - smart man that he is - asks me, ‘Mason’,” the older boy mimics, lowered voice and a rough facsimile of Hannibal’s rich, warm accent. “‘Mason’, he says. ‘You’ll have to forgive me if I’m speaking out of line, but have you ever had the boy’s throat?’ And I just stared, Will. Can you imagine? I just stared at him like a fish gaping out of water because I haven’t had your throat. I haven’t had it even once.”

And now Will stares, first at Mason, then at Hannibal and it takes everything in his power not to glare at the man, not to narrow his eyes in anger and undeniable nervousness at the way he so smugly smiles at him. The man is as cruelly insatiable as Will himself, and he has all the power here where Will has none.

He wants to spit, to struggle and claw his way free and run, or crawl away somewhere.

He controls the urge with the running thoughts of how he can hurt the man in front of him, how he can gauge bloody furrows in his arms and bite him when he tries to go near him

again. He thinks of it and lets himself seethe in anger as he holds his expression as clear as he can.

“Have you not?” he asks at length, wondering how Mason could have forgotten, the first night he had Will and how he had tormented him then. He arches again, bringing attention to the rest of him, just as appealing to fuck and beat and torment, hoping he can distract with the cruelly suggested idea for a moment more.

“I would know, Will, if I had.” Mason tells him, seemingly entirely content to wipe that night from his mind as experience, shaking Will by the hair gently, until he locks his jaw and swallows thickly, eyes flicking to Hannibal again, upside down but still commanding, still sending Will’s entire body to desire and heat just by looking at him.

“Oh,” he sighs, licking his lips and looking once more at Mason. “It… isn’t easy -”

Hannibal hums, one hand in his pocket, the other wrapped around the cigarette that he draws from his lips and motions with, a passing gesture to mirror with embers and smoke the curve of Will's arching body.

"It sounds as though he's done it before," Hannibal suggests mildly, as though Will isn't glowering at him, isn't certainly plotting to hiss and spit the moment they're alone together, as though Will isn't even in the room. "I imagine he'll be in control of himself, then, and certainly aware of how much you detest a mess."

He takes another drag as Mason considers Hannibal's words, and the older man can't help but send the boy a secret smile as Mason's eyes light up and he declares. "Good, I want him on his knees."

Will isn't given time to protest before he's tugged to the floor with a thump, forced to pull his legs underneath him to accommodate the demand as Mason holds him by the hair.

"This is why Hannibal is here, Will," Mason informs him, releasing Will to shrug out of his coat and drape it across his desk. He continues, back towards them both as he undoes his waistcoat, removes his shoes. "He's volunteered - isn't that nice? He's volunteered to help train you in the right way to do this. Normally I'd just shove it in there and hold it until you learned," he laughs loudly. "That's what I do with the others, anyway, but it never goes very deep. Hannibal's assured me that you'll be able to take it much further than that if he's here to educate you."

Will very barely restrains a laugh of utter shock, looking between the two of them where he kneels. He knows Hannibal planned this but he cannot fathom why. Why he would want to watch Mason take his pleasure from Will's mouth and his choking and his tears when he himself could do it later that evening, another time entirely.

Regardless it would be entirely futile to argue, would do him more damage than good to struggle. He brings a hand up to press to his lips and sits back on his heels.

"I've noticed he's rather selfless," he says, tone deadpan, eyes up and brow raised. "And how does he plan to educate me?" He licks his lips, fingers by proxy, takes them away. "I assume

any verbal orders would be given by someone who has extensive practice at this. Anything else would have to be a physical education."

Hannibal's expression remains unchanged, even as Mason barks another laugh, watching Hannibal.

"The boy has a point," Mason grins. "You've gotta give him that. Struck a nerve, Hannibal?"

The older man's jaw works, and finally allows a faint smile. "I am a doctor, or was, familiar enough with the human body to know many things. No nerves struck but in the boy himself, and I would strike him beyond simply his nerves were he mine."

Mason sighs, eyes rolling towards the ceiling. "You're so serious all the time. It was funny."

"It was insolent."

"Look, this is all beside the point, which is that I want," Mason draws the word out, his favorite word, his favorite concept, to want because he knows that for him, to want is to have, invariably. He holds Will by the jaw, something like affection - or at least amusement - still brightening his eyes. "What I want is to cum down your throat. And if Hannibal wants to watch then -"

The older man makes a small sound, draws a glance from Mason, who turns back towards Will. "Or not watch, I don't know. Hannibal can do whatever he wants. Don't be disobedient," he warns Will, a pluck of tension in the tenor of his words. "You know what happens when you're a bad puppy."

Hannibal settles against the edge of Mason's desk with his hands against the wood. They splay there, a slight gesture, but entirely intentional to suggest to Will the last time he bent the boy over and made him cum across the polished surface.

He'd made him lick it clean, and remains unsure as to which of them delighted in the desecration more.

"Do not let him speak again," Hannibal instructs, and Mason works his pants loose. "See how much he can take to begin."

If he can't have the boy when he wants him, he'll make do with what he has, a peculiar arrangement of the three to which Mason seems to pay little mind, not ever shy about these things, and to which Hannibal revels in the sense of envy that curls black inside of him. He draws a deep breath, to feed the tension in himself, to foster it and let it grow so that it will be fierce and furious by the next time they are alone together.

Will glares before his eyes flick to Mason, wide and light, instantly shifting to the little plaything he loves so much, to the puppy he is around Mason Verger.

If Hannibal wants to watch that is entirely his business. If he had orchestrated this for his own sick amusement, then Will is not going to make it an easy show to enjoy. He parts his lips wide and splays his tongue, making a soft sound of pleasure and leaning closer to Mason, as

far as the man allows for the moment, to lick against the rough fabric of his pants, lips drawing together in a semblance of a kiss.

“Puppy woke up in a mood,” Mason comments, voice low, pleased, allowing Will to nuzzle and suck against him for the moment before yanking him back by his hair and working his pants open with one hand.

“He’s always been so good,” he says, drawing his cock free and meeting Will’s eyes until the other sits almost hypnotized. “Always bends so far, takes so much… you should see him, really, when I’ve pushed him past what he thinks his limits are. Splayed and sobbing into the pillow begging it to end,” Mason curses, presses the head of his cock past Will’s parted lips, jerking his hair when Will closes his eyes so he opens them again.

“It’s truly beautiful, he barely sounds like himself. And he’s such a good boy, always takes more anyway. I’ve made him bleed before and he’s still crawled over me in the mornings - nnn - god, he really is something.”

In as long as it takes Hannibal to crush out the remains of his cigarette, he has already considered half a dozen ways in which he could snap Mason's neck before the man could even draw another breath. His jaw works, once, and the darkness eases from his eyes by force of will alone.

"I'm sure he is," agrees Hannibal, far too mild a tone. "Although he can be far more, I'm certain, and making him bleed is not the way to ensure he remains well enough for you to continue to enjoy."

Mason sighs, an agonized drawn-out groan of exasperation, fingers curling around Will's jaw to hold him in place. "Hannibal, if this one breaks, then I just get a new one." He turns his eyes, icy blue, down towards Will who looks up to meet his gaze. "I haven't managed to do anything permanent to him yet."

"Remarkable."

"It is," chirps Mason, and his voice trails off into a high, pleased sigh. "I'd have gone through two or three of them by now, normally, but Will is," he laughs, "Will is made of sturdy stuff."

"A particular ambition to live," Hannibal intones. He is grasping now, a sensation almost like regret creeping through the cage of his ribs, cold and unpleasant, but Mason waves a hand at him to silence Hannibal's ruminations.

"Make him do it for me," insists the older boy, and Hannibal sits up a little straighter.

Will sucks with relish, tilts his head and hums, works his tongue, his jaw, puts on a show of wanting to be nowhere else but here, right now, on his knees for Mason as Hannibal watches. And in a particularly vindictive way that is exactly where he wants to be. To watch Hannibal twist and fight himself for his own magnificently stupid choices.

“Hold his jaw,” Hannibal instructs quietly. "Keep your fingers and thumb where you can feel his teeth part, so he can’t close it again.”

Will makes a soft noise when Mason does this with a little too much force a little too much enjoyment, nails pressing but not digging into his skin. He knows they will.

“How much do you think he will take?” Mason asks, a strangely childish curiosity even as his voice turns breathy and softer, pleased with how much Will is taking already, how much he is enjoying it.

“He will take what he is told to take,” comes the curt response, and Will shivers, setting his hands against clothed thighs to hold on even as incrementally the thrusts grow deeper.

“Push further, don’t let him pull away. He will grow used to it if he swallows, if he breathes through his nose. If he doesn’t he will choke.”

It wasn't intended as a suggestion, but Hannibal knows that as soon as he says the word, he might as well have meant it that way. Mason shifts his hips forward, and a laugh shivers past his lips as the tip of his cock bumps the back of Will's throat, and draws a heave from him.

Blue eyes watering, but no less luminous, Will watches only Mason, a softness in his expression - something like forgiveness - as he sucks with damp clicks against the older boy's length. Eager. Yielding. He presses his palm down against himself and moans as he rubs, sending another spark of pleasure to prickle goosebumps across Mason's skin.

Hannibal's eyes narrow, sharpen, watching Mason work himself deeper past Will's flushed lips, swollen and slick and perfectly pink, slow pressing increments to bring himself deeper.

"Will," Hannibal interjects, though there was no conversation but moans between the two younger men, his voice cuts through as though their were, claiming Will's attention back to himself. "Relax your jaw. Stop trying to make him finish by sucking."

Mason's eyes widen at the passing, and entirely intentional and equally empty, accusation. A careful slap, just enough to startle, to sting, catches Will's cheek. "Bad puppy," Mason declares. "Very bad. I'll be here until I'm satisfied, and until I see you take all of it."

The tension wrought in Hannibal's chest unfurls a little, seeing the boy so chastened, re-establishing himself in the room between them, and his tone softens, conversational. "Through your nose, Will. When you feel him brush the back of your throat, begin to swallow."

Will has perhaps half a moment before Mason pushes in, deeper, and again, and Will’s eyes close, his throat contracting against the intrusion, desperate to breathe and get away. Fingers dig into his skin now and he makes a helpless sobbing sound.

"Swallow," Hannibal tells him, and Will chokes once more before he manages, a series of desperate swallows and work his throat, that pull Mason in deeper with a groan and low laugh of delight.

"Fuck, look at him." Mason's fingers dig deeper against Will’s cheeks, into his hair, and he growls for Will to look up, to open his eyes, pushing harsher until the boy does. And then Will does something, unsure what, beyond desperately trying to breathe and not throw up, but

something, and his throat opens properly, for Mason to push in so deep Will’s nose is buried in the dark hair at the base of his cock.

"Good boy." This from Hannibal, the man reaching back to take the book of matches from the desk, another cigarette already between his lips. "Swallow and breathe and don't you dare bite him."

Will sobs, closes his eyes as tears leak from the corners, and struggles against the hand that grips him. He wants this to end, to stop. He cannot help the tears, the desperate sobs and moans, but he keeps his lips parted, jaw aching, so as not to bite, to let Mason fuck his throat like this.

"Lovely boy," Hannibal murmurs in French around his cigarette, lighting it with another match pop hiss. He shakes it out and leans back on one hand, only not hard due to the truly insufferable presence of Mason there, but with an expression of curious wonder. As if the boy is a painting, something to be appreciated and fascinated by, that simply happens to be stowed in a water-logged cellar wholly unbecoming of its radiance.

Mason chokes out a shuddering laugh and turns his hips, dragging his cock out a little against the swell of Will's lips, and working it back in to the hilt. A whimper, high, from Will whose fingers tighten and Hannibal clucks his tongue.

"Do not panic," he reminds the boy, leaving his words in French for now, with Mason so thoroughly distracted. "Your body tries to convince you it is choking, but you are breathing. And you are beautiful."

Will tries to close his eyes but forces them open just as soon, before Mason can force him to do so. The older boy, laughing, merely runs a gloved finger across Will's lips to trace up the spit there, grinning to see the younger boy nuzzle against the curls of hair again.

It is almost affectionate, and Hannibal feels his fingers tense against the desk.

"Perhaps I should not have mentioned this to him," Hannibal breathes in French, seething smoke in soft dulcet tones. "Perhaps I should simply have let him continue to avail himself of your ass instead, rather than something that would give you rest. Do you enjoy bleeding as much as you appear to enjoy th-"

"Hannibal!" hisses Mason. "You're ruining the mood."

"You asked me to teach him."

"Not now, he's got it already," retorts Mason. The boy picks up a steady rhythm, thrusting with surprising consideration into and out of Will's throat, delighted to see the entire thing disappear in such a way, more pleased even yet to feel Will swallowing around him, to see the working of his neck and know it's his cock that sits heavy in Will's throat.

Hannibal goes quiet, his half-truths sufficiently spoken. It is a reason, certainly, to give the boy's body time to recover, to show Mason how to enjoy his violations without doing so much harm in them. It was also a flight of fancy that Hannibal himself would rather have

indulged in - to watch those eager blue eyes turn up towards himself, to feel every sweet little moan and shiver - without fully considering the very real depths of his own envy in watching Mason fumble greedily through it.

"Begin swallowing," Hannibal notes, French, his tone dry, disinterested as he examines clinically that raw snarling jealousy in his chest. "He's close. He's been worked up about this for some time now. And by all means, continue to show him how much enjoyment you take in this. Choke, and add to his pleasure," Hannibal snarls softly, and Mason thrills, laughing, at the sharp tone.

Will barely hears it, having honed in on the words *he's close* and working harder to make that become an advantage, rather than a hindrance.

He chokes without prompting, with Mason predictably delighting in this. It turns almost brutal without Hannibal instructing further; Mason's thrusting faster, harsher, pulling out more than it is comfortable to quickly adjust to and Will wonders how hard he will be beaten, with Hannibal here, if he just threw this up after - because the possibility is becoming more and more imminent.

Fingers twist cruel in his hair and then Mason is groaning something pushed in all the way down Will’s throat, and Will swallows only because he can do nothing else. Obedient in this despite his desire to not be.

At least, he thinks weakly, I can't taste a thing.

When Mason finally pulls out, satisfied and soft, Will draws air like he's drowning, one hand splayed on the floor and digging sharp nails into the wood, the other up to press the back of his wrist to his lips as he coughs, shuddering with sobs he can't control as his eyes keep leaking, dripping tears down his nose and to the ground.

Mason watches the sputtering and sobbing, and in it finds a deeper thrill than in any he experienced during the act itself. It's visible in the crooked curve of a grin that tugs up one corner of his mouth - in the lift of his chin, smug and prideful. But Hannibal has only eyes for Will, his own pride as transparent as the boy's anger, flushed red and hot across his nose, his cheeks. Deeply pleased by the boy's obedience not to Mason but to himself, in doing what he was told despite his own disgust.

He resists the urge to scoop the boy from the floor and merely extinguishes his cigarette instead. There is no need to console himself with thoughts that Will's loyalty and fearlessness will one day be his.

Will already is, his entirely.

"Well that was fun," laughs Mason, putting himself away with a quick button of his trousers. "I think he liked it, too. Did you see how sweet he was, Hannibal?" Mason crouches, and ruffles gloved fingers through Will's hair, a quick pet before he folds his hands together. "What a good boy."

Hannibal moves to stand, casting a passing glance over Mason, and then towards the door. "Very well-behaved," he agrees softly. "He is attuned to his master's voice."

"Yes, he listens very well," Mason nods, solemn, before rising to make his way to the desk and seek out a cigarette. He stops beside Hannibal, a darkness in his tone that is unfamiliar to Will, not the thunderous cataclysm of declarations and abuse, but a lower tone, an earthquake, or the promise of one. "Next time, in English. I want to know what you're saying to him."

A brow lifts and Hannibal hums his agreement, allowing Mason's sharp gaze to level on him a moment more before the younger man takes up a cigarette, his tension relieved enough for now to seem nearly calm, far less manic than when he first arrived.

"Leave him," Mason decides. "I want a drink." He claps a hand against Hannibal's shoulder and turns the man towards the door. Hannibal doesn't resist, nor does he risk another look towards Will drawing himself up to sit back on his heels, hands pressed shaking to the floor.

There will be time enough for Hannibal to enjoy the boy's anger once Mason's boundless hungers have been sated.

It is rare for Mason to sleep at all, rarer still to leave Will untethered when he does. And the boy takes full advantage.

Climbing out of bed, Will finds his pants, much looser around his hips now, and takes one of Mason’s cigarettes before striking a match to light it. His throat still burns from earlier that day, still raw and entirely violated for the man’s sick pleasure, for a pleasure he will take of Will again and again now that he supposes he is entitled.

Will smokes slowly, eyes on Mason’s sleeping form, before he makes his way downstairs on silent bare feet. The den is winding down, now, so close to the early hours of dawn, and Will bends almost entirely over the bar for one of Mason’s bottles of unsullied wine before standing back to drink from it. He knows that whatever eyes are still there watch him, this bruised and thin thing smoking and drinking in a den of cheats and thieves. He feels the thrill of it.

He flicks the cigarette out the door as he passes it to the back room, intent to consume the entire bottle alone before crawling back upstairs to bed, Mason none the wiser. He has the door closed and the bottle down before he hears the familiar hum from the corner, sees the familiar plume of smoke.

"Fuck," he sighs, hand up to press to his eyes. "Can't get a moment's goddamn peace from you two."

Another hum, mild displeasure, as Hannibal uncrosses his legs. He doesn't stand yet, but the motion is promised as he presses a hand to his knee, and draws the cigarette away to speak.

"I thought that this was covered abundantly," Hannibal responds. "Your foul language, and your comparisons."

Will shoots him a look of disbelief, before he takes a swig from the bottle and snorts disdain. "When you act just like him, why wouldn't I lump you two together?"

Hannibal seems to consider the question, and his fingers twitch in anticipation of the burn of Will's cheek beneath his hand when he slaps the insolence from his mouth. Slowly, he stands, unfurling predatory and slow from his seat, and moves closer with unhurried strides.

"Then I would imagine, if your mind is so decided about us both, then you would rather merely have one to keep you occupied, rather than both." Will doesn't draw away, meets his eyes fiercely as Hannibal stops in front of him. "Insulting, cruel boy. I will let him have you, then, and involve myself with you no further."

Will laughs, and it's a low thing, warm.

"You would have, a long time ago, were you able," he points out, the familiar widening of his eyes that suggests the words have struck that cool fear within him that his words ardently deny. He will never voice the genuine fear he has of Hannibal growing bored and leaving. If he ever left him, here, Will would lose his mind.

The slap hits unexpected and Will turns back quickly to spit at the man in front of him, livid, shaking from the disgust of the morning before, the fear that had gripped him then, too.

"You had no right," he hisses, "to tell him to do that to me. To sit and watch and talk to me about my master's voice. Fuck you."

He dodges the next strike and claws at the hand that catches him around the middle when he turns away. And for once, it's genuine, a vicious struggle with nails clawed and teeth bared, kicking out when he’s lifted and whining when a hand comes up to cover his mouth tightly to silence him, harsh enough that Will cannot even open his jaw wide enough to bite him.

He snarls, holding the boy pinned back against his chest as he thrashes and fights. "Are you not mine? Mine entirely, to use how I please? I could not have you myself, and so I would have you by proxy. I cannot stand the thought of him doing you permanent harm, and so I have shown him another way. What would you have of me?"

Hannibal twists as Will throws his weight, and bends over the boy, doubled over him, nearly smothering the breath from him with the broad hand pressed across his face. His voice drops lower, against Will's ear, and he is unable to hide his pleasure in the fight that the boy brings to him, knowing innately that Will would have his eyes were he able to get his claws in them.

"Would you have me kill him? Bring down the wrath of all of his allies and the burden of all of his debt on our shoulders? Say the word, and you will have it, and all the suffering - far worse than this - that it entails. Would you have me steal you from him, and see the same fate, pursued through the alleys like hares in a coursing?"

He kisses fierce against Will's neck, teeth leaving their mark, lips following it, tongue pressed against it even as Will squeals his displeasure and tries to yank himself free.

"Beautiful, obstinate boy. If only you could see yourself as I saw you before, you would understand my motivation completely. Your mouth and bravery equally on display, the pride in your actions despite your own disgust for them, to perform for me, as I wished it."

He releases Will's mouth and pushes his fingers back through Will's hair instead, turning his nose against it with a slow smile, boundless pleasure in his own sadism and Will's obedience to it.

"Hate me if you must, but better to show him this than to see you made crippled and then disposed of by his hand."

Will makes a sound barely restrained behind bared teeth and thrashes harder, heart hammering and blood humming. He wants none of this, not the praise or the hold or the gentleness when he wants to do the man harm, wants to see him bleed and suffer.

He goes suddenly still, entirely, shaking in the tight hold Hannibal has on him, eyes closed and jaw working, finding the floor with his toes as he’s lowered enough to allow it. He stands pliant for a moment longer, Hannibal not convinced enough to let him free, before he can't anymore, his anger still burning hot, and drags his nails harsh over Hannibal’s arm enough to leave marks, to snag on skin and tear it, if a little.

He's turned quickly enough to have Will lose his bearings, slapped hard enough to lose them more. And again, knuckles harsh against his cheek until Will cries out and finds the sound stolen from him with harsh lips and a seeking tongue.

And this he struggles from harder. Writhing and biting until the kiss is broken and he's slapped again for his trouble, yanked back harshly and held pliant. Will is dizzy, wonders if he can taste blood or is just so resigned to the idea that the taste is now conjured at will. He feels Hannibal slip his hands beneath his thighs to lift him and tries to twist from that before it's futile and he has no grip on the floor, legs around Hannibal on reflex.

"I hate you," he spits. "Detest, despise you." And for all his hate, the kiss forced on him is returned with as much fervor.

"Cruel," he gasps, digging his nails against Hannibal’s shirt, "inhuman, sadistic -"

He groans when Hannibal bites under his jaw, a harsh thing, claiming, and feels his entire body shudder in pleasure.

"My insufferable master, I hate you."

He turns, a swift movement, to pin Will back against the door lest anyone try to open it and find them this way, although it is hardly more than a manhandling, a brutal taking from one who fights it with every ounce of strength left in him. Hannibal kisses the words from his mouth, a savage crushing of mouth against mouth, tastes the blood and venom and wine from his boy's lips and savors every drop of it.

"Your hate will not save you from me," Hannibal promises in a growl, another rough kiss stolen even as Will tries to bite him and returns it all at once. "I will have you even still. You are mine, however I may have you."

One arm beneath Will, the other forced into his hair to bend him backwards and kiss seeking down against his throat, against his collarbones, against his chest still bare. A bruise is found, not Hannibal's own, but quickly made his with a harsh suck against his skin. A hiss, sharp, as Will gouges his nails into Hannibal's back, tearing skin, blood welling warm and slicking down beneath his shirt. He releases Will's hair to press hard against his throat again, trapping him entirely against the door, forcing their eyes to meet.

And there, in the boundless black of pupils blown wide enough to block out the blue, Hannibal knows the simultaneous truth and lie in the boy's words, adoration and spite mingling irresistible and lovely, an outpouring of every emotion tangled together and made audible in the gasp that parts his scarlet lips.

"Beautiful boy." The praise sings as clearly as the hate, affection to rival loathing, and just as genuine as Hannibal nuzzles firm against the boy's cheek, enough to force his head to turn, to breathe a gasp across Hannibal's ear. "Brilliant, decadent boy."

Will makes a sound, like a whine but softer, body shaking with adrenaline and the fight still within him, eyes closed tight and lips parted to pant hot air into the room. He wants him, prideful and angry and feral as Will is, now, Hannibal wants him; through the hate and meaningless words Will is desired, always.

He shivers, and his nails turn to rough fingers, sliding up Hannibal's back to his hair, over against his cheeks.

Will is allowed to turn his head, allowed to kiss Hannibal once more, lips parted and pliant, tongue demanding and allowing itself to be tamed against Hannibal’s. Will has missed him, from the short time since he had been in this room beneath this same man he has missed him so.

"Your boy," he gasps, snarl still against his lips as he kisses him again. "Your angry, spiteful, obedient boy." He rolls their hips together, relishing how hard Hannibal is beneath him already, and his lips part on a high sound of pleasure. "What does my master's voice want me to do now?" he whispers.

As if there were any doubt as to whom truly belonged to whom, Hannibal growls low at the words, rutting fierce against the boy who can undo him so entirely. More’s the loss for Mason, who doesn’t see the control and elegance in Will’s submission, who doesn’t see the boy for as clever as he truly is. And all the gain for Hannibal, then, who slips his hand down the back of Will’s trousers to spread him, teasing fingers against his opening.

“I want to know what you will give me,” Hannibal murmurs, kissing up along his neck into his hair, nipping at his ear and speaking in a low rumble against it. “Fierce boy, tell me - will you give me more scratches and spite, only? Your hate, your fury? I will take what I want but tell me first if that is all I deserve of you.”

Will moans, pleased, shivering soft against the door and rocking his hips down against Hannibal's hand. He does not point out that everything Hannibal wants from him he gets, and he gets it willingly - Will's voice and his pliancy, his resistance and compliance both.

"You deserve the blood for your misjudgment," Will whispers, words harsh and quick as Hannibal pushes fingers deeper into him and Will's back arches. "But you will have me, all." A gasp, almost innocent, lip between his teeth and eyes wide on the man who pulls back to see him, "if we must suffer him, we will, but anything you ask of me I will give, always."

A shudder, all the way up Will's spine and he keens. He wants the man so deep he forgets his own name, sobbing Hannibal's instead.

Hannibal shoves against the boy, pushes him to the door hard enough to drive the breath from his lungs and pins him by his throat, snarling soft.

"Then take what I give you, if you know it is from me." He pushes his hips against the boy, to rub them roughly together, and curls his fingers as deep as he can reach. "Do not humiliate me again in front of him, or I may find myself with nothing left to give. Prideful creature, if you will take what I give you, then *take* it."

A kiss steals whatever breath is left from Will, an aching little moan as another violent shiver collapses his spine and softens him against Hannibal, dire affection in the little breathless kisses he takes, in the whole of his body rubbed in offering against the boy who clings to him so desperately.

His fingers slide free of Will, too little given and too soon taken, and he muffles the boy's whine with his mouth again, Hannibal himself now made breathless by the ferocity of their exertions. He tugs Will's pants down first, just enough to bare him, his own following in a flurry of movement, and he spits generously into his own hand to slick himself, lining up against the boy.

"Do you hate me still?" Hannibal insists, his clothes and hair and being disordered by the boy, sundered by his presence and his words and the little sounds that tease and tear at every nerve in the man's body. He should not care so much, he knows the truth of the boy's devotion to him, but the words fall beyond his thought or control, maddened. "Do you hate me, Will?"

Will grins, bites his lip and holds his breath until he feels the head of Hannibal's cock breach him and twists in pleasure.

"With every ounce of my being," he breathes, lips parting wide on a silent groan that ends with just a click in his throat as Hannibal pushes in, deep, a quick motion that leaves Will weak and shaking with need, and he surges forward to kiss him.

Every moment he shares with Hannibal he hates, knowing how short it will be, how secret and controlled. Every moment away he detests because he isn't there, to touch and taste and peel the boy apart. He lives in a cycle of it, destruction and creation, impatience and desire, over and over, breathing, sleeping, eating, just to have this again, to shudder in Hannibal's arms as he fucks into him and claims him again.

Claims every bruise and every cut with one of his own.

"Hannibal -" Almost a sob, needy, warm, the true intention of his words, their true meaning heavy and obvious here, now, between them.

“Yes,” Hannibal breathes, finding a frantic pace between them, not only taking his own pleasure, but delighting in feeling the boy writhe with his own. He watches as it spreads along Will’s cheeks, the same color as his anger, and kisses adoring along his face. The boy is a wonder, in truth - he could flee from this place and stand a reasonable chance of escape, were he to go outside the city, and yet he remains here.

“Hannibal, please,” comes another little sound and Hannibal knows why Will stays.

For him.

For this.

“You are wasted on him. He does not deserve to have you - to be able to touch you, to look on you,” insists Hannibal softly, breath coming short, hard against Will’s neck as he drives into him. “And someday he will not.” He slips his fingers down further, to grasp Will’s cock - so hard that it’s hot to the touch - and curl his hand around it, allowing this too to match the rhythm already struck between their bodies. “Do not,” Hannibal warns, as ever, although he knows that Will would not finish without his permission. “You will know when.”

Another shudder, another breathless shift of his body back against the flimsy door that shifts with every powerful thrust against him, another twist of his hip and another utterance that could be a name of a curse or both.

The words sink against him, slip through his skin, behind his eyes.

He wants to tell Hannibal to take him away, wants to tell him to fuck the consequences and do it. Wants to know that a man so powerful, so manipulative and clever, would bend to his will that way, simply because Will had begged it of him.

“Please.”

Begged and arched and presented for him.

“Hannibal, please, I need -”

Stayed for the abuse and cruelty for him.

"You will have," breathes Hannibal. "You will have anything you need, in time."

He sucks a mark against Will's neck, braver now in leaving them, more foolish perhaps, as time goes on and Mason is none the wiser to the tryst between them. Hannibal's mouth is hot, scalding against Will's skin, cool with the shock of steady pain and bared exposure, and he keeps it there until Will's whimper reaches precisely the tenor that he wishes, and only then does Hannibal release in him, a rush of heat, wet and slick, and only then does Hannibal release Will's neck from beneath his mouth to kiss the boy instead.

"I will give you everything," he swears, a rough nuzzle, another plunging kiss to smother the boy's pleas in his mouth.

He pulls free and lowers Will, legs shaking and arms trembling around his neck, and in the same movement Hannibal lowers to his knees. Eyes turned upward, as Will did to Mason in Hannibal's place. Lips parted, to draw the boy's dripping cock between them, as Will performed on him by proxy. Hard hands grip his quaking thighs and his tongue presses hard against the underside of Will's length, burying the boy in his mouth down to the hilt, opening his throat for him, sucking, merciless in what he will do for Will and for no other.

The sound Will makes it entirely helpless, skin flushed as he brings a hand to his mouth and bites hard against a knuckle to keep himself quiet as the sensation pulls him into a crest of pleasure and he cums, hard, fingers of his free hand buried in Hannibal’s hair, gripping hard and shaking as his entire body opens to this.

When he’s finished, Will lets his hand drop from his mouth, teeth marks cruel and red in a rim around the knuckle there, and sobs, pulling his lip between his teeth instead.

It had felt exquisite, like nothing else: tight and hot and convulsing over and over, and the knowledge that Hannibal was on his knees for him, for no other, to give Will the pleasure that Will had only felt the pain of not hours before…

“Oh god,” he swallows, once, again, draws a heavy breath through his nose and presses his hand to his lips again. He’s shaking hard, uncontrollable now, and more than adrenaline, more than an orgasm that nearly knocked him entirely off his feet. It’s a tremor of a body too exhausted, now, too close to just laying down and staying still.

A quick swipe of thumb across his lip, a wry look towards the boy who - quite rightly, it seems - laid bare Hannibal's own skill in this particular act, and he stands. Careful hands smooth his shirt and trousers, to little avail considering the mess he was made into in their fervor, and he buttons his trousers carefully before sliding his arms around Will. A firm embrace, to let the boy go loose against him and keep him standing, his own release still quaking through his veins but finding strength enough to support the little thing as Will draws against him.

Hannibal turns his cheek against Will's hair, and he buries his nose there to breathe in the scent of arousal, release, smoke, liquor, sweat from him all at once. A heady mixture, enough to dizzy him, and he hums softly.

"Come with me tonight," Hannibal asks softly. "I will return you in the morning and find something enough to sate his curiosity about where you've been. He keeps you here only by expectation, nothing more." His hand smooths Will's curls back from his face, turning their eyes to meet. "You risk his wrath, in doing so," the man admits, reluctance tempering his words. "But I will endeavor to stay his hand from it." Hannibal presses a kiss to Will's brow, and tastes the thin sheet of sweat there before he whispers, "It is entirely your choice."

Will swallows, nuzzles against Hannibal’s shoulder in a sleepy, entirely childish way, and the words catch him like a snarl of thorns against skin. It would be so simple, to return upstairs

where the man lies in a dead sleep, collect his clothes and leave. It would cost him nothing but his skin if he were caught. And that's only if he were.

He could go, catch a train and leave London entirely, vanish into the mundanity of country life, return home, go anywhere else.

And leave Hannibal behind.

No.

Skin grows back - he won't go.

"I need my boots," he says softly, swallows again and turning his head into the soft hands holding him.

This, Hannibal knows, is the side of claiming ownership over another that Mason will never understand. It is beyond sex, beyond marking in bruises and scars, beyond fierce words of possession. It is more than that to care for another so entirely that you would wish to have them as your own, to pick them up when they are broken and make them whole again.

He hums against Will's hair and presses a kiss to sweat-damp curls. "Stay," Hannibal murmurs, lifting the boy easily and carrying him towards a chair, toes scuffing against the floor. He settles him there, a hand stroking softly through his hair again, and only reluctantly pulls away to tug his clothing back into place and push his own hair back from his face. His expression sterns, eyes a little narrowed, jaw set so as to brook no question from anyone he would pass in the den, and he goes.

True to form, no one stops him when he crosses the room with an expression hinged somewhere between impatience and exhaustion. The inebriated remain sprawled across their couches, the bartender pays him no more than a look, and he passes amongst them all through the haze of smoke to ascend the stairs two at a time.

The door creaks when it opens, and Hannibal holds his breath for a moment. A slight stirring from the form across the bed, watched closely by the man before his eyes adjust to the darkness, ill-lit by the flickering of gas lamps from outside the windows.

"Hannibal," grunts Mason, more alert than Hannibal thought him to be, unfortunately.

"Yes."

"What are you doing?"

A beat, and Hannibal shrugs, though it is unseen, to add a cadence to his voice. "I left my cigarettes and wished to retrieve them."

Mason's arm slings across the bed, and finds nothing there beside him. A heartbeat, two, and then a snore, as Hannibal's eyes narrow. He does not notice the boy is not there. Does not think of him now, does not expect his company to be there alongside. Whether it is due to the effect of the poppy or not matters little - his unworthiness curls Hannibal's fingers into fists before he snares Will's shoes and shirt from the floor where they were left.

He does not deserve to have the boy beside him in sleep, beneath him in carnal exchange, breathing the same curdled air that fills this place and makes it rank to Hannibal's nose.

The thoughts come, how easy it would be to end him here and now, enough time until morning before he was found in his own blood soaked into the filthy mattress, enough time for him to take the boy and flee and keep him entirely to himself.

The thoughts go.

He closes the door quietly behind himself, and descends the stairs again to find his way to the back room.

Will sits sprawled over the table, eyes half-open in sated pleasure. He's redressed himself, curled his feet up on the chair with him, a small and unobtrusive thing, as he always is here, as he has grown used to being. He looks up when Hannibal returns, hums and nuzzles the circle of his arms before sitting up to accept the clothes and don them.

He dresses quickly, the shirt now too loose as well, and he wonders if it's due to the lack of food, the abundance of drugs and sex or a mixture of everything. He doesn't feel starved, he is rarely hungry, but he knows he's smaller than he had been, leaner than he should be for his age. Some days he misses the good meals at the boarding school, misses the quiet there, misses the routine. But it's so rare that he hardly thinks about it unless he's been strapped to the bed for hours, struggling with the things on his wrists.

He follows Hannibal out of the room without a coat, leaves the wine in the back room without a second glance - it hardly matters - and takes a cigarette when it's offered, cupping his hands around a match to let the tobacco take.

Outside, it's cold, truly, and Will delights in the shivering of his body, spreads his arms to feel the air around himself. He walks in wavering lines only because he can - he so rarely gets to go outside, now, that it's a novelty once more.

They walk in silence, sharing only the smoke of their cigarettes, the clouds of air from their breaths when those, too, expire.

Hannibal owns a house, and Will finds this utterly unsurprising, following him to the tiny porch and into the tiny space. It's little but utterly private, entirely his own. He steps inside and turns when the door closes, watching Hannibal here, in his own space, waiting, as lilac lips press together and he smiles.

He shrugs out of his coat, eyes darting to observe the boy as much as Will observes him. In a new space together, the air crisp, cold, free of the stench of smoke and sex, free of the seemingly insurmountable pressure that weighs them both down so constantly.

A deep breath is drawn and held, to let linger the feeling of exhilaration at Will being in Hannibal's home - his, now, here - and finally released.

"Make yourself comfortable," he intones, a generosity not typically granted towards visitors, and certainly not granted ever in the confines of the den. Will grins, bruised lip caught

between his teeth as he kicks off his shoes and stretches, arms wide, just enough for Hannibal to slip beneath them and lift him again, mouths meeting with a hum, tender and sweet.

Hannibal doesn't remind Will that there will, in all likelihood, be hell to pay for this on the morrow. He hardly lets himself think it, focused instead on the slender arms that curl warm around his neck, on the feel of the lithe little body pressed fast and safe against him.

When their mouths part, only enough to breathe, their foreheads still press and Hannibal carries him further inward to the darkened house, not enough time to bother lighting the lamps, not enough time altogether.

"Whatever you wish," Hannibal murmurs. "Simply ask it."

“You,” Will replies, and it’s smooth, warm, a lower tone than one he uses at the club, both sleepy and seductive without the falseness that his usual act brings. He kisses Hannibal again, smiles at the hands splayed warm against his chilled skin. “As much as I can, tonight, until we ache.” He wants nothing more than to feel the softness of a bed beneath him that won’t be coupled with beatings and torment. He wants to bury his nose in the pillows and smell Hannibal there. He wants to unravel, twine the knots and strings of his being around the man he currently holds so close against him, entirely in his thrall.

The soft smile that appears at Will's words is entirely genuine, no malicious intentions underlying it, no untoward plans towards the boy who opens himself so entirely to Hannibal in turn. "Then you will have me," he agrees, and ducks to scoop Will up beneath his knees and carry him back towards the stairs, creaking loud in the old house, up them, to the bedroom that waits there for them.

For them, a curious thought in itself, for one who has been so content to spend his time alone.

Will is dropped lightly, unceremoniously, upon the overstuffed bed, laid thick with blankets to shield against the chill outside. Watching him as he stretches and groans, shirt riding untucked up over his pale belly, Hannibal peels out of each article of clothing with more care than perhaps befits them, considering the rumpled state he still finds them in after leaving the den.

He wants to speak, to promise the boy that this is only the first time of what will be many, that he will feed him and clothe him and make sure that only clean things touch his beautiful body, that he will fuck him speechless at every given opportunity and leave a kaleidoscope of colors across his skin.

He says nothing, but hopes perhaps it is known without such uncertain declarations as those, and sits against the edge of the bed to watch Will, and simply enjoy the sight of him for a moment more.

Will stretches to take in as much of the bed as he can, at once. Fingers splayed and knees spreading, twisting until he feels the sheets warm to him, twist with him too. He watches Hannibal only barely, between half-open eyes, he knows the man can see him - knows the man is enjoying it, where they won’t be interrupted, watching his boy (and he is undeniably his) present himself to beautifully.

Will brings cold fingers to his shirt to work the buttons, deft and quick before peeling out of it and letting it fall to the floor. It's cool within the house but not as it was outside, and Will feels his skin skitter with goosebumps before biting his lip and arching up with a soft moan, already needy again, already his body begging for the man to touch him again.

He slips his hands down to his pants, working the buttons there as well, before slowly, deliberately, working them down his hips, one inch at a time, revealing just the thatch of dark hair at his groin before stopping, slipping back to rest on the bed, tilting his head and ducking it, coy.

"Are you not exhausted?" Hannibal teases, overtly amused by the young man coiling wanton across his bed. "Should I fetch you a glass of warm milk to settle you? A snack before bed?" With a stretch, he leans back to lay beside Will, strong limbs heavy as a leg, an arm twine around the boy to bring him near and warm the chill from his skin. He rubs slow along Will's back, allows his fingers to dip along the curve of his back to tug against his trousers, and inch them slowly lower.

"Insatiable," the man murmurs. He presses a kiss to Will's cheek. "Libertine." His neck, next, arched before Hannibal. "Shameless boy." His chest, then, several times to feel each bruise beneath his lips, to sigh against the beat of Will's heart beneath his mouth.

Will is turned onto his back, hands around his slender waist to skim his pants from his hips, as Hannibal's mouth moves lower, lingering, as eager to taste every part of Will that he can as he is mindful to take his time, now that they have that luxury.

Will arches, keeps his eyes on Hannibal as his lips seek lower, as his eyes keep on Will's.

In truth, Will is bone tired, the comfort for the bed pulling him to sweet cloying sleep that he fights with every ounce of willpower he has left. He does not know when they will do this again, if they will be able, and he is damned if he will sleep through his only chance to enjoy Hannibal this way, allow himself to be enjoyed in turn.

He spreads his thighs for Hannibal as the man lowers his lips to them, bites his lip and holds his breath. If he could, he would pull Hannibal against him and sleep on him, curl against his chest and hold on, head ducked and heart settled to match his rhythm. He would sleep and he would wake to him, just as warm, just as sleepy. Allow himself to be kissed awake, allow himself to be woken entirely. He makes a soft sound at the thought, parts his lips and arches his head back with a sigh, eyes closing.

Hannibal watches, notices, memorizes every movement that Will lays bare before him. The curl of his fingers against the sheets, the hitched breath that catches in his chest, the knee that draws up alongside Hannibal to spread himself. All of it, Hannibal's alone to know so gently as this, to explore with warm fingers against Will's thighs, guiding a path for his mouth to follow.

Will is entirely beautiful, unfathomably so for such a brutal city as this. There is some bitter sense that he would end up in such a hell as he's been living, knowing as Hannibal does that this city and its residents are either destroyers or the destroyed, but as he watches Will's lip snare between his teeth, a kiss pressed to the join of his thigh, Hannibal wonders.

The boy has not been destroyed. Not by whatever came before this. Not by the poverty or the drugs or the hunger. Not by Mason.

A destroyer instead, then, he considers, and makes a soft, thoughtful sound to himself before finally licking a slow, long line against Will's length, already twitching to attention. Hannibal nuzzles the soft hair there, kisses lower still to the velvety skin of his balls, upward once more to suck lightly before beginning his way upward again, to find himself brow to brow, nose to nuzzling nose with the dangerous, dark-haired beauty in his bed.

He bites back the question that nearly escapes, and kisses Will to suffocate it entirely instead. The man's name will not be mentioned again here, not tonight, nor any other night that Hannibal can abscond with his boy.

Thin arms around his shoulders and Will pulls him lower, closer, letting them slip over the warm skin there, feeling the raised and hot marks his nails had made before, feeling the tackiness of the blood he had drawn. He soothes them, now, drawing hands lower as his knees draw higher, meeting in the middle where his thighs press his palms against Hannibal’s hips.

“How long do we have?” he asks softly, when they break to breathe, still pressed so close Will can feel his lips brush Hannibal’s. "Before he wakes? Before he notices?”

He wants to know if he can have his desire of being woken by this man, if he can have him pressing hot kisses down his body until Will shudders and moans sweetly for him. He wants to. He wants to give Hannibal his voice where he cannot at the den, where it is forced from him by Mason he wants to give it freely now.

"The sooner I bring you back, the safer," Hannibal admits. "Should he awake to find you there, he may well never know that you were gone." An arm wraps over Will, easily snaring him by the waist and drawing the boy astride him, still held close, as he rolls to his back. He seeks a kiss, leaning up to take it, and slips his other arm around Will as well, to keep them chest against chest. "If I keep you until the morning, then we will need a reason. You have accompanied me on an errand, perhaps, for which there was no one else available. You risk his wrath, then, but I will do my best to assuage it." He rubs long lines along the length of Will's body, a faint smile appearing as he shivers beneath the touch, eyes heavy-lidded, sleepy and serene. "Would I have my way, you will stay with me, but it is not me who may suffer for it. My ears, perhaps, but I have learned long ago not to hear him." A long sigh, relaxing into the bed, softening with the weight of Will atop him. "It is your choice."

“You give me power where I don’t want it,” Will murmurs, settling his hands to frame Hannibal’s hair where it lies soft against the pillow. He can barely see him but it hardly matters, he knows the man by heart, now, with his fingers and lips - he could be blindfolded and recognize the touch of his hand. “Were it safe to, I would fall asleep on you, right here.” he smiles, “and wake when you woke, to the feeling of your fingers on my skin and your lips against my hair.” He rolls his hips gently against Hannibal’s and licks his lips. “I would give you my voice as he only seeks to take it. You would hear me cry your name, sob its syllables in pleasure.” Another gentle rocking down against him and Will hums. That, at least, he can give him. If Hannibal were to take him again, he would be vocal, needy, a helpless creature at his mercy entirely.

“I want to keep my skin,” Will laughs bitterly, “My bones. There is little else to keep between.” A swallow, soft, and Will starts a slow rhythm of skin dragging against skin, pleasant friction and heat. “But I want you to have that.”

There is a shift of expression, so slight that it may simply be a movement of shadows in the darkness of the room, a tightening around Hannibal's eyes, the barest drawing in of his brows, a movement in his jaw.

He places a warm hand against Will's cheek, and traces a thumb across his cheek. It's as though, for a moment, Hannibal can feel the morning sun across his skin, luminous and bright and healthy, rather than sunken and bruised, a sleepy affection in his eyes rather than the strain to remain awake despite utter exhaustion.

Hannibal swallows roughly.

"There is a great deal more to you than merely that." He doesn't let Will lean close enough to kiss again, keeping his hand against his cheek and the boy at distance enough to meet his eyes. "I will take everything from you," he warns him. "Perhaps I am no better than he. I will take all you can give me and more still."

A hesitation, a heartbeat, no more than that.

"Would you go with me, knowing that? To fall asleep beside me and wake against my chest, knowing my cruelty far outweighs the worst depths of his childish imaginings? If I could arrange it, Will, would you go?"

Will blinks, the same bare-frown that Hannibal had passed by as merely a shadow across his eyes settling a little heavier on his younger features. He had seen the glint in Hannibal’s eyes during particular cruelties, he had seen the delight he had gotten in seeing Will limp when he was through with him, the delight he took in marking Will harsher and darker than Mason ever had.

His lips part and he sighs, shifting still against Hannibal now, feeling the man wake to life beneath him as well, with their words, their thoughts behind them. He imagines, he considers. Thinks of what it would feel like to suffer greater than he does, but to be allowed this in the end, to be rewarded with soft touches and gentle words, to be claimed and kept and adored and abused for this man’s pleasure.

It sends shivers down his spine, sends his thighs tightening where they rest against Hannibal, and he swallows.

“I need my boots,” he whispers, feeling his lips tilt.

A rough rumble, fierce and sudden approval, purrs from the man as his fingers slide back to twine in Will's hair and tug him into a kiss. It is a dangerous game - deadly, even - but the thrill is a heady rush, and moreso the thought of having this boy, these lips, that heart to call his own.

His only.

"Stay with me tonight," Hannibal breathes, heart pounding in raw animal pleasure as their foreheads press together. "And I will begin my work tomorrow."

His hand finally falls from Will's cheek to instead slide against his thigh, both hands moving against his legs, to spread them against him, body rolling languid up against his boy sitting lovely and feline atop him. Though he feels himself stirring to interest, just as clearly, Hannibal can feel Will's weight over him, his aching need for sleep, for rest, recovery from the ordeal he has suffered. The ordeal in which he lives.

Lives now, but will not in due time.

"Rest," the older man insists softly. "And I will wake you in the morning to have my fill of you before we return."

Will doesn't bother voicing that it's possible after that morning there will be none of him to have. Thinks of what Mason will do to him once Hannibal has pacified him and gone on his way. Thinks of how at least he can wake up to Hannibal just once, have the man bring him the most exquisite pleasure because he wants to.

Without a word he shifts back a little, reaches to tug the blankets over them both, and settles his head beneath Hannibal's chin.

It's a pleasant fantasy, but they are just words.

Until the morning.

So Will sleeps.

Morning

Chapter Summary

> “You would bend for me and beg?” Will is amused, teasing just to see the other’s eyes darken, that possession to come back to him, that coiled animalistic desire to take and keep and hold for good. Will bites his lip, arches his head back as he rocks his hips further, a harder friction, moans. Then he bends, unexpected, and sets his teeth against the man’s collarbone, sucking hard enough to draw the blood to the skin, to set the imprints of his teeth against it. He only pulls off when Hannibal tugs him by his hair.
>
> Then he grins.
>
> “I would see my marks on you,” Will tells him.

Will wakes slowly, surprised by the warmth beneath him, around him, surprised by how quiet it is.

He can hear the city but it doesn't grind against his bones.

Everything hurts. Muscles scream. Head pounds and throat grates on itself until Will swallows enough to soothe it. Beneath him, the steady pounding of a heart, warm hair against a broad chest, and Will slowly rewinds the exhausted tape in his mind to remember.

And then he smiles, hidden, still, gentle, but so youthfully genuine.

He knows Hannibal is awake by the soft patterns the man’s fingers draw over his back, by the way he can feel him hard against his skinny thigh. Will shivers, pleased, and moans softly as he stretches himself awake, an entirely innocent sound, a deliberate rub of his cock against Hannibal’s, a shift to nuzzle into the warm hair of his chest and 'accidentally' brush his lips over a nipple there.

He is rested, enough, at least, for this, he is warm. And he wants to feel the man awaken against him.

A deep breath is drawn, a low rumble of sleepy satisfaction in echo to the boy’s little sounds. One arm wraps around him, circling Will’s slender waist, and without yet opening his eyes, Hannibal reaches to drag the blankets over them both, unsettled in sleep.

He turns his cheek against Will’s hair, fingers curling to stroke softly through the dark strands, and presses a drowsy kiss, content enough to simply feel the boy against him in the stillness. Time, warmth, touch, all longed for and never enough time for any one of them, let alone the three at once.

Hannibal does not repeat his promise from the night before, the words still fresh on his tongue, sworn, and so it will be, especially in the light of morning with Will still coiled heavy and soft against him.

Another kiss, another slow tease of fingers, another press of hips against hips, and finally a slight smile plays across Hannibal's lips, and his eyes open just enough to feel his breath stolen by the look that is returned to him, tousled hair and flushed cheeks.

"Good morning." Rough-voiced from smoke, harshened by deliberately cruel words and whispered promises and made thick with sleep.

Will hums, pleased, comfortable, and tilts his head so he can see the man properly. Barely tousled in sleep, severe even in his softness. It makes Will shiver again, a genuine delighted thing. Makes him twist lightly in the hold just to feel it tighten against him.

He shifts so his thighs rest on either side of Hannibal's hips, straddling him before turning his hips to rub, a shameless demand for a base desire.

"Good morning," he responds, voice just as gentle as the night before, his own, not an act of innocence or petulance. He pushes up further and presses his lips to Hannibal's, seeking the gentleness he had felt against his hair and temple, seeking him, fully, entirely, bared by exhaustion as Will is.

It's slow, a deep thing that sends Will's heart quickening and his breath stuttering in his chest. He closes his eyes, parts his lips sweetly, obediently as Hannibal seeks to do so with his tongue, presses closer still and moans softly when he feels Hannibal's hands skim down his back, over the curve of his ass to hold him closer, hold him down as he rolls his hips up and rubs his hard cock against Will's in promise.

Will trembles, slides thin arms to wrap above Hannibal's head in a semblance of an embrace, arches his back to bring their hips together, warm and wanton and surprisingly patient here. He wants. He wants and he will take what Hannibal gives him, and in turn give him everything: his voice, his obedience, his suffering.

"Oh..."

The little sound pulls a rough shiver up the length of Hannibal's spine, another soft growl from deep in his chest. A curl of movement raises him up, rutting in long, sleepy strokes where he pins the boy's hips to his own.

But beyond the strong hands that hold him, there, Hannibal resists the urge to turn Will beneath him, to keep him trapped under his weight and feel him wriggle. It's tempting, to capture the squirming boy who grins so softly into the plunging kisses between them, but then Will twists his body again, slender and slight, and Hannibal groans softly.

He will give the boy this freedom, now, to set the pace between them, to bring their bodies together in whatever way moves him. A control allowed by Hannibal, still his to stop or alter as he sees fit.

Laying back from the kiss, eyes hooded and expression still serene, he studies the length of Will as he arches backwards. The blanket slips from thin shoulders and cool fingers press through the hair on Hannibal's chest, raking slow along his skin, and the man slips his hands to Will's bare thighs, to steady rather than ensnare.

"Would you have me lay claim to you again?" Hannibal asks with a hum as Will rocks down against him. "Or would you lay claim to me instead?"

His eyes glint, dark even in the morning light, warm amusement at finding himself beneath this clever creature.

Will’s lips part, a surprise there he had not expected to show, was usually so good at hiding but here…

His mind slips into a strange spin, then, of possibilities and opportunities, and he swallows, straddles Hannibal enough to sit against him, watching him as he is, upper body exposed to the cool morning air, blankets pooled around his thighs, just on top of Hannibal’s hands where he holds him.

“You would allow it?” he asks softly, and it’s genuine, another almost childish wonder of a question, at being allowed, at being *asked*, it has been so long since he has been asked. He rolls his hips in a gentle motion and grins when Hannibal’s breathing catches.

“You would bend for me and beg?” Will is amused, teasing just to see the other’s eyes darken, that possession to come back to him, that coiled animalistic desire to take and keep and hold for good. Will bites his lip, arches his head back as he rocks his hips further, a harder friction, moans. Then he bends, unexpected, and sets his teeth against the man’s collarbone, sucking hard enough to draw the blood to the skin, to set the imprints of his teeth against it. He only pulls off when Hannibal tugs him by his hair.

Then he grins.

“I would see my marks on you,” Will tells him.

A tenebrous gaze follows the curve of Will's neck, swanlike in its pale elegance but for the marks that darken it like shadows, memories of touches forgotten as they fall into shades of sage and marigold. Blossoms that bloom and fade, and will spring anew at Hannibal's beckoning.

Will's grin widens, devious and darling all at once, to see Hannibal watching him so intently, and slowly the older man releases his hair, lets him settle low again to return his lips to Hannibal's neck, kissing the bruise he made.

"You would not wish for me to bend and beg," he murmurs, mollified for the moment. "You do not enjoy my company for that, and you would not have it any more than I would give it to you."

He closes his eyes, a primal sound snared in his throat, and strokes Will's hair back from his face, letting him, in this at least, seek his delight.

"Leave your marks, then, wretched boy," he hums into Will's hair. "And I will take my own from you two-fold."

And so Will does, bites and sucks and nuzzles his way over Hannibal's throat and down to his chest, bites gentle against a nipple, tugs it with his teeth, all the while his hips push steady and needy against the man under him, working him harder, working himself the same.

He's breathless by the time he's satisfied, bruises dark and small against Hannibal's throat, his shoulders, down to his chest. Possessed just as keenly, and Will pushes himself up to kiss the man again. His body is alive, now, hot and aroused and aching for Hannibal to have him again.

He does not care for what awaits him when he returns, for the moment it doesn't matter. He cares only that he can tease, and push, and poke the beast beneath him long enough for him to pin Will and hold him there.

Will grins, bright and pleased, bites his lip as he watches Hannibal, as he pushes back, finally, to crawl backwards from him, keeping his eyes up, bright, beneath his fringe, as he slinks low enough to breathe against Hannibal's cock, dark and full against his stomach. He keeps his own hips up, thighs spread, presented but not for the man to see, a tease there as well, before he ducks his head to lick almost delicate along the thick vein from balls to head.

Hannibal's rough groan lasts the length of Will's tongue against him, an entirely genuine and animal pleasure. He hadn't expected how wild with envy the sight would make him the night before, an amusement for his own amusement and the boy's distress, a regrettable thing in practice. A shiver as Will bows deeper still before him, slender fingertips lifting the weight of Hannibal's cock towards his lips, and a kiss pressed slow against the tip.

Far lovelier to feel it himself than by the hideous proxy that he put in his place.

"Cruel boy," the man sighs, watching heavy-lidded as Will's lips wrap just enough around him, as his eyes turn devious, and his legs splay a little further still. It's a pity that he cannot be in both places at once, enjoying the talent - and there is no other word for it - of Will's mouth and the sight of his presentation, entirely exposed for the taking.

He spreads a broad hand across his chest, following the path of Will's mouth, dipping his fingers into the bruises that darken already where the boy left them. He will touch them, he decides, from above his clothing when the boy is watching him in the den, and remind them both that given his freedom, Will chose to use it in taking Hannibal.

Will takes him deeper, swallows more and more of his cock until he hits his limit, throat tightening in anticipation and fear of the previous abuse again. He curls a hand where he cannot reach with his lips and pulls off, stroking slowly, deliberately, before ducking his head to suck again, a moan humming over Hannibal's cock, pulling another sound from the man.

Will closes his eyes and starts a rhythm, taking him deep and pulling back, relishing the taste, the man's responses, before bringing his free hand down to stroke himself as well, in time. Cheeks flushing torrid and lips parting on a soft gasp as he pulls back, a string, translucent, connecting his bottom lip to the swollen head he had just stopped tormenting.

He lifts his eyes, smiles again, arches into a sitting position, thighs wide, hand against his cock slow and deliberate for Hannibal to watch. He plays with himself without shame for the man before him to look, knows his cheeks are on fire, that his body slowly grows to be the same.

He's close, enough that his palm is wet now with pre cum, that his thighs tremble.

"How have you not had me?" he asks, breathless. "Ask anything of me, I'll do it, Hannibal, please -"

In truth, despite the throbbing pressure of how hard he is, Hannibal could lay perfectly content and watch the boy tease himself. Study the way the hitched breaths tug his body tight, observe the curl of his fingers and how they slide against his skin.

He is beautiful, always, but like this, especially. Lithe and lovely and liberated to be so, to bring himself a pleasure too often denied or ignored entirely.

Hannibal shifts a little, turning just enough to the side that he can watch Will entirely as he touches himself. His cheeks darken, flooding scarlet down onto his neck and shoulders, and Hannibal's smile curves a little deeper.

"I have had you astride me," he murmurs, slipping into French, rich and warm, simply because they can. "Held against the wall, more than once, wrapped around my hips and turned so that I could press the length of my body to yours. I have pinned you beneath me, facing and away. Your ass, your mouth, your hands in passing."

He draws a breath, and reaches down to trail his fingers through the dampness still slick along his cock, stroking a few times, and humming pleased when Will's belly tenses in pleasure at the sight and a gasp falls from his lips.

"I would have them all again, any one, so long as it meant that I could be inside you," he sighs. "To kiss you and feel your release shake your body and know that you reserve the truth of your beauty for my enjoyment, alone."

Will shudders, sets his hand against his thigh when the teasing grows too much - it is unspoken that he obey and keep himself on the edge until the man sees fit to free him, grant him his release and swallow the gratitude of sighs and whimpers and murmurs of his name.

“I have never had you atop me,” he breathes, bending to kiss soft against Hannibal, up under his jaw, to his cheek, to his lips.

“Please?”

It’s strangely sweet, the request, considering what they are, what they do, what they’ve done.

Will rocks his hips down again and moans, a shivering and pleasant thing, that turns up in pitch as he’s flipped, expertly and quick, to rest on his back. Will grins, wraps his arms around the older man, draws his knees up and presses them up around Hannibal’s middle.

Hannibal brings their faces near, noses brushing soft against the other, kisses grazing without consummation but rather simply the gentle slide of mouth against mouth, mingled sighs and matching heartbeats.

"You can be such a polite boy," Hannibal praises him. "When you ask 'please' so beautifully."

He tastes Will's tongue as it curls against his own, a kiss that spreads wide and eager, and Hannibal drops his hands to Will's arms. Calloused fingers follow the smooth curves from his shoulders, across knobby elbows, to skinny wrists that Hannibal could circle with room to spare within his hands.

Will's palms are brought to Hannibal's mouth, a hot sigh against each, kisses to soft palms that - despite how Hannibal has watched him tug and work at the leather in which he so often finds himself bound - remain unworn, a scholar's hands, skilled far beyond what Mason would ever notice or appreciate.

"Ask me again," Hannibal intones, German now, amusement bright in his eyes.

Tongue parting his lips, Will curls his fingers around Hannibal's hands and takes a moment before grinning, quick, and murmuring *please* in a gentle German purr.

"Remarkable," sighs the man, catching both of Will's wrists beneath his hand and holding them lightly above his head. "Someday I will be free to explore your mind as readily as your body."

A passing promise, as he skims a hand down Will's ribs, pressing against stretched skin, taut where his arms are held in pace, until he passes over the valley of a hip, and grasps the boy's cock in his hand. Slick from the tip downward, so heated hard that it seems to throb in time with Will's pulse, and he strokes in one long pull up over the head, chin lifting as the boy arches his neck on a high little whimper.

"Beautiful boy," he sighs, slips his hand down over Will’s cock again, pulling back the skin over the head, bringing up a thumb to rub there, eliciting a genuine sob from Will, a near-violent shudder pulling him to twist and twitch beneath Hannibal.

"Please," he gasps. "Not yet, not yet -"

"No," Hannibal hums, parting his lips to suck a bruise deep and large just above Will’s collarbone, thumb still tormenting him in soft rubs until Will's voice pulls weak and high, and Hannibal grants him a semblance of mercy.

"Spread your thighs for me," he whispers, leans back to watch Will come back to himself enough to obey, pressing his hips harder against the mattress as he shifts first one leg then the other, spreading himself as he had before, bent above Hannibal, arching up again when he’s spread fully, wanton and flushed.

A pleased purr from Hannibal as he watches, brings his free hand up to skim his knuckles over the soft, exposed skin, dark with bruises, welts where Mason had grown impatient and whipped him, and Will had kept quiet, so quiet, just to spite the man.

But for Hannibal, another soft sound, oh, nearly wholesome in its sweetness were the boy not spread so shamelessly in front of him. He does little, he knows, to earn those sounds, but to stay his hand and use it carefully. From the marks he can see, he knows that even that restraint is enough.

Fingertips follow a raised line, fresh, drawn by the stinging tip of a cane just beneath the boy's groin. It must have left him speechless, perhaps falling towards unconsciousness from the force of such a blow on such sensitive skin. Enough that a little harder, a little more poorly placed, he could have cut right through the thin skin and into a vessel.

The boy would have bled to death before Mason stopped laughing enough to notice.

A darkness, not a storm but the sun behind a cloud, passes across Hannibal's features as he lays himself before the boy. Bent for him, after all, and begging his forgiveness as he brings his mouth to the wound and kisses apology against it.

Against the bruise beside it.

Against the marks of nails raked near that.

Thighs between which Hannibal would kill to be, a beautiful and brilliant boy treated no better than cattle. He hesitates, fingers spreading Will open just gently, and his breath is warm as he speaks.

"Do not move your hands from where I left them," he murmurs, amusement that carries threat behind it, however playful in intent. A game for them both to play, in the easy light of morning. "And do not remove your eyes from me."

And with that, Hannibal leans in to drag his tongue across the boy's opening.

The second command Will disobeys first - from sheer surprise and shock at the sensation. Arching back and trembling, biting back a moan as Hannibal keeps licking against him, gentle, worshipful. Then Will returns his eyes to the man between his legs and does not disobey that again.

It feels exquisite, this shift and play against him, drawing pleasure from nerves he didn't know existed for anything but pain, there. His breathing grows harsh quickly, ragged and needy, and Will shivers, gripping the sheets above his head and drawing his nails against his palms through them.

"Hannibal..." A sigh, not a whimper or a keen but the softest of sounds, as worshipful as Hannibal’s lips against him, his tongue pressing just within him.

He wants more, in truth, unused to such gentleness, especially from this man before him, unused to more than control and demand, just as cruel in its taking as Mason but far more welcome. He thinks of Hannibal’s words of the few hours before and moans again, lip bitten between his teeth, the sound uneven and trembling.

He will take anything the man wants.

He will disobey to feel his hand against him in punishment.

Obey to feel his lips.

Will behaves beautifully, for Hannibal, and for Hannibal alone. He's watched Will disobey Mason - sometimes overtly, a fierce resistance to some new humiliation, sometimes in far more subtle ways, clinging to his wild spirit despite how badly Mason thinks him broken.

He has never seen Will disobey him, no matter the depth of cruelty to which Hannibal felt driven that day. And even now, curling catlike beneath Hannibal's mouth that offers only the torment of unfulfilled pleasure with licks and sucks and long kisses, he keeps his hands snared together, his eyes open and focused regardless of how he aches to let them roll closed in delight.

Hannibal reaches beside the bed, a pot oil that he strokes against himself with eager fingers, and as Will's eyes widen in anticipation, the older man only drives his mouth that much harder against the boy. An open kiss, sucking and guiding his tongue inside, to force Will to work that much harder to keep his eyes open as he peels from the bed with an unrestrained moan, pitching high in the freedom he has to express it.

It reaches such a note as be unmistakable neediness, echoed down the length of his body that twists against restraints laid on him only in words, in commands gladly taken and followed. Hannibal kisses up the length of his twisting boy, feels his grin building past his bitten lip without needing to see it, and knows Will watches every kiss, every trace of Hannibal's fingers up the boy's hips, his ribs, teasing across a nipple with his teeth, to kiss beside his mouth, denying him that simple pleasure only to watch the flicker of surprise when he leans to kiss Hannibal and Hannibal teases away.

"Behave," he murmurs, no more able to restrain his amusement than Will is as he lines himself, settles between the boy's thighs, and intones softly. "Spread."

Will’s eyes flicker in something close to a blink and he does, obedient here too, stretching himself enough to feel the ache in his muscles. He keeps his eyes open, his hands curled hard in the sheets, enough to pull them from the mattress, enough to cause a mess he knows he will be teasingly chastised to fix.

He swallows when Hannibal starts to push in, already quivering and needy, still sore from the night before and just *aching* for this now. The sound he makes is entirely helpless, high and soft and gentle and *young*, so young. And Will disobeys without thinking about it, turns his head away, lets his eyes close as his lips part wider and he whimpers, desperate for more, and deeper and *now*, and not asking for anything.

He turns his head when he’s turned and licks his lips, eyes up on Hannibal again, wide and blue and needy.

“Please.”

Hannibal swallows roughly, forces himself to breathe as he sinks into the boy, until he is buried inside of him, their bodies joined flush together, no hurried shove, frantic rutting, to

bring them both to animalistic release as they join together in the den. He remains still, inside of him, gasps again as Will's body twists and tightens around him, as Will squeezes and amusement brightens his eyes beneath wayward curls of hair.

The slap that catches his cheek is gentle, just enough to surprise, and Hannibal holds Will's jaw in his fingers, leaning near to speak softly against his mouth.

"Eyes on me, Will," he insists. "Do not lose this to your wanton thrashings."

This memory, this moment, rarer than anything Hannibal has ever experienced, absurd in that fact, that something so simple as time together unharried would be such a luxury.

"Watch me," he breathes again, and finally he allows Will to lean in and kiss him, a brusque return, quick, small, rough things again and again. "Stay with this."

Quick, Hannibal snares Will's thigh and draws it up against his side, rocking into him, and sighing hard between their mouths with room enough to let the boy's lovely noises escape.

It's relentless, the depth the touches, the softness of it all. It sends Will's mind into a tailspin, sends his body to endless, deeply pleasurable shivers. He keeps his eyes on Hannibal, hooded and barely open in his pleasure, but he watches.

He watches the way his lips part, dark, just above Will's own, the way Hannibal rolls against him not to break him but to protect, how he covers him with his body, does not crush him with it. He watches the way he's touched, feels it, remembers, almost loses himself with the intimacy of it all, the closeness.

He whimpers when he kisses Hannibal next, a deep thing, slow, surrendering entirely to him as he wraps both legs around him now, high knees and ankles brushing the base of his back. He squeezes his muscles, relaxes them, sighs out, gasps… and then Hannibal presses deep enough to brush something within him that makes Will buck up and twist, nearly sobbing his pleasure against the man above him, breathing his name, feeding it to him when he's kissed.

He keeps his hands above his head, knuckles white.

"Please," comes the familiar sigh, and Hannibal shivers to hear it.

"No."

"Hannibal -"

"No, Will."

It is as fond a banter as if they were at the museum, the gardens, taking in the tourists feeding pigeons as they ate lunch. Warm and familiar, wrapped in an all too genuine desire that even now tugs at Hannibal with the intensity of it.

He turns his hips again, slicking his cock nearly out of the boy entirely, and grasps Will behind his knees to watch himself enter, again and again, quick short bucks of his hips to hear the jagged whimper that rises from Will's throat. Leaking copious clear fluid across his belly

where his cock bumps against it with every thrust, Will chokes back a sob and curls his toes, knees bent back nearly to his chest.

Another long thrust, to watch the boy spread around him.

Slower, again, to watch his muscles twitch as Hannibal presses inside.

And with a grunt of satisfaction at the sight of Will impaled, body shaped to suit Hannibal's own, he lets the boy drop his legs back around and strikes a rough rhythm against him, smothering out his cry with a kiss.

It is dizzying, it's too hot too close too much too hard and Will relishes it, kisses back with fervor, feeding Hannibal his pleas that way through long drawn out whines and whimpers and quiet sounds he can't name. He's so close, quivering and leaking and begging to cum, and still he holds back, allows Hannibal to take this from him, to give him this.

Obedient with only words to bind him.

He wants to touch, to draw his fingers through the damp hair tickling his skin, over the shoulders curved above him, over the back bent and the hips that push against him so hard. Will wants to drown in this, in the shared speed of their hearts and breaths that linger.

He is a mess of pleasure, of electricity and boundless energy and he wants and wants and wants.

"Let me touch you," he gasps, shivering. "Please Hannibal let me."

Rocking back far enough to nearly pull out of him, Hannibal watches, his body flushed just as warm as Will's now, as the boy's breath catches in his throat. A few short thrusts, to rub the head of his own aching cock against that sensitive spot again, before he lays down heavy across the boy and buries himself to the hilt again.

Slow motions, all, so close to finishing himself, as though so long as they remain here, joined, nothing can separate them. As though time has stilled and this moment would exist eternally, for them alone, for as long as they can sustain it.

"Yes," the man sighs, shaking, and turns his head against the trembling hands that press against his cheeks, kissing sweet fingers and soft palms, wrists scarred by bondage and skinny arms that surround his neck.

"Good boy."

Will's fingers tangle in his hair, down his neck, sliding over his back and to his sides. Endless movement, liquid and languid, as Will's breathing hitches again and again having Hannibal so close, fucking him so soundly.

But it's more than that.

Do not lose this to your wanton thrashings.

Will's lips part wide, feeling Hannibal's ghost against them, and he keens, a shaking desperate noise.

"Hannibal please," he breathes, eyes barely open, cheeks red. "I need... I'm going to... please..."

He sobs when Hannibal wraps his fingers tight around him to hold him steady, coherent enough to hear.

"Breathe, Will, just a moment more."

Though he himself sounds breathless, he himself sounds near-undone, and Will shudders hard, bites his lip harder and nods in quick jerking motions.

The acquiescence, the youthful readiness to please and be found satisfactory, to overcome even the more primal drives of sex and self-preservation, simply because Hannibal wishes it so, all in that nod, that quick wide-eyed movement, and enough in only that to pull Hannibal's orgrasm from him. A deep, hard thrust, enough to rock the boy and the bed beneath him, lips curling over Hannibal's gritted teeth, he fills Will with warmth, the strength of his body weakened almost to trembling with release.

Hannibal thrusts inside of him, softer now, almost involuntarily, to spend as long in the boy as he can. He keeps his fingers wrapped around his cock, scarlet from the blood trapped within it for so long, and hushes the boy as he whimpers when Hannibal finally begins to soften, slowly, inside of him. A swipe of his thumb across the head, leaking copious against his fingers. A tug, slow, to tease. And with a devious narrowing of eyes, Hannibal reaches lower, to press a finger against Will's opening, hot beneath his touch, hotter still as he slides a finger alongside himself and stretches the boy further still. Humming softly, low enough to sound nearly like a growl, possessive and pleased to feel his own seed inside the boy still pleading beneath him, he works inside slowly, to bend, and press.

And with a sigh, still breathless, Hannibal murmurs, eyes alight and amusement curved across his mouth. "Now, Will."

A beat, before he releases him.

"In Latin."

"Master, please -" the word comes unbidden, thoughtless, and then Will is pulsing his pleasure against his stomach, arching up and sobbing it as Hannibal keeps him stretched.

My cruelty far outweighs the worst depths of Mason's childish imaginings.

Will shudders, closes his eyes, turns his head aside and pants to catch his breath. He would have this. He would have anything the man gave him so long as he could. Enjoy it. Feel it seep against his skin. Pine for it. Ache. Beg.

"Hannibal..."

A sigh, sleepy and contented, a beautiful gasp when Hannibal removes himself, his fingers, from the red stretched hole of his boy, watches it tremble, wet. Entirely his to claim.

Hannibal hesitates, hands stroking warm against the boy's shaking thighs, exhaling a soft sigh as he takes in the sight of him, bared and laid raw for Hannibal in such willing submission, such beautiful obedience.

"Again," he breathes, and Will blinks, languid, towards him.

His legs are released, and Hannibal slides alongside him, arms around his middle, leg across his thighs. Teeth graze Will's shoulder first, tongue, lips to raise eager marks from his skin. Breathing warm against his neck, kissing slowly, the man murmurs, in Latin, "Say it again."

Will's laugh is as warm as the blankets the boy tugs back over them, as the sun that bears witness to them both through the uneven panes of glass.

"Master?"

A hum, deeply pleased, and more than that, entirely amused, the brilliance and poetry of a boy who can pull Latin from its grave and make it beautiful again, no less while spilling his seed across his own lean belly.

"As though you mean it," Hannibal answers, rueful, as strong arms pull the lithe boy back against him.

Will bites his lip, a slow, deep groan as he arches his back, neck stretched and bared for Hannibal to taste, hips back against him.

"Master," he purrs, an entirely indulgent sound, hot and thick like caramel against his tongue and Hannibal curses quietly that he cannot take the boy again, cannot bend him on all fours and force more beautiful words past swollen lips to hear them break.

"You like it," Will grins, entirely too pleased with himself. Back to French for the moment, a flawless flow from one language to another.

The response, playful and soft, comes in a language Will doesn't know. He presses a kiss to Will's shoulder, slides aside his hair to kiss higher along his neck, to bury his nose in the curls and breathe him in. The words are repeated, a little more added, a warm language that sits well-suited against his accent.

A tease. A puzzle for the boy's mind to work through, the second time a repetition for Will's memory to seize it as Hannibal knows he has, for him to seek out and discover.

A distraction, to keep his cleverness as whole as Hannibal can manage, when he is returned to the brutal tedium of the den.

"Turn to me," Hannibal purrs, an affectionate rumble. "I want to look at you."

Will hums, rolls his hips deliberately back, and turns in the warm embrace of Hannibal's body to face the man again. His eyes are hooded, dark, and somehow softer, here, genuinely

pleased and amused, and Will kisses him because he wants to, parting his lips and smiling against him.

"Look your fill," Will whispers.

Another kiss, gentler even than the one before it, softening with each shift of lips against the other, quieting as their breath returns to them, the beats of their hearts find each other again.

"I could never," Hannibal whispers. "I might spend a lifetime trying and I cannot imagine I should ever tire of the sight of something so remarkable." A breath, another kiss, to feel the warmth of Will's blush beneath his mouth. "Someone," he corrects himself, softly, an apology unspoken.

The sun is rising, piercing high through the window, and Hannibal knows that they have risked far beyond what they should. To have gone at all, let alone lingered so long, Mason will surely be awake by now and turning the den over in seeking them both. He left his stories with the others, to console Mason that Hannibal had business at the docks, and wished a witness should it turn rougher than Hannibal intended it to be, but it is a reason that requires rational thought to accept, and there is none to be found in that place.

Worse yet in knowing that as he lays here, danger building with every kiss exchanged, every warm nuzzle one against the other, it is not his skin that he risks.

A breath, a pause, a rough swallow as Hannibal presses their foreheads together, and asks, gently, "Have you thought about killing him?"

Will's eyes slowly raise to meet Hannibal's and he blinks.

He has, of course, in his cruellest moments. When Mason had torn his voice from him, had forced Will to bend and arch and scream until he had no air, until he lost consciousness and woke to beatings.

He has considered.

"There is little else that occupies my thoughts," Will admits gently, before letting his eyes close again on a sigh, "when you are not in them."

His words are genuine, but Hannibal turns them over a few times despite. A brush of his nose against Will's, eyes distant for a moment, considering all the truths of which Will is not aware, the things he doesn't know yet still opens himself to entirely. Devoted in words and actions, in mind and body.

He works a hand through the boy's hair and kisses his brow.

"Sweet boy," he murmurs.

No more explanation is given than this - none needs to be, Hannibal hopes, as Will tucks his head beneath Hannibal's chin. Entirely trusting in the same arms that will soon return him to peril.

Punishment

Chapter Summary

> Mason listens, much as he can, lips pressed into a thin line before this tension too releases. His hand rubs warm across Will's tired shoulders, and he delights for a moment in feeling its whole body quake beneath him, from exhaustion, from fear, from pain upon pain and now this, holding himself against the ground, exposed.
>
> "You know what I do to liars, don't you?"

It smells like cooked eggs and warm bread. Beneath the still-stale smell of smoke and bodies, Will tenses and bites his lip. If Mason is having breakfast already, he is in for hell. He doesn't try to make himself inconspicuous, doesn't sneak upstairs and pretend to nap, nor go to the couches and lie on those.

Mason would have checked.

Mason would have seen that Will was not there.

Not at the den.

Not in his bed.

And beyond the fact that he doesn't care much for Will's well-being beyond knowing he has a hole to fuck that is more or less willing, he knows that Will's absence will be an explanation he will not believe.

Will runs his hands through his hair and bites his lip, gives Hannibal a careful lingering look before glancing to the back-room door and away again. Hannibal opens it. Will does not follow him. Instead he finds a pipe, sucks hard enough to feel the onset of dizziness in his mind, a numbing of his limbs. Enough to dull the inevitability of pain that he himself had chosen.

Hannibal had given him a choice.

He had stayed.

He isn't long on the couch before he is hauled from it, by the same hands that had not hours before held and caressed him, now turned rough and cold for their master.

Will barely makes a sound as he's tossed to the floor at familiar white shoes, familiar white pants, the hems of which rest too high when Mason sits. Will wonders if he knows.

"He is useful when he's sober," says Hannibal, obviously an explanation continued from before Will was privy to the conversation. "I don't know French and we needed the security."

Will bites his lip, understands the alibi enough to quickly come up with a story should one be asked of him. Should Mason require his dog to speak.

He ventures a glance up to the man who thinks himself his master, and blinks. Innocent. Naive. A beautiful boy to distract and play with, nothing more.

Mason remains unmoving but for his foot that slips slowly forward, toes lifting to raise Will's chin and bring their eyes to meet.

"Bad puppy."

An icy drip of words, a curious sort of injury in the narrowing of his eyes, in the twist of his mouth. Not simply angry - though certainly that - but just as much hurt.

A spoiled boy in a man's body.

"Where, oh *where*, did my little dog go?" he sighs, unsettled. "I woke up this morning *entirely* alone. Do you know how *alarming* that is? Do you? When I have become so accustomed to feeling you at my *feet*."

Will knows well enough by now when Mason is asking a question to which he wants an answer, and when he's asking one to answer himself, and remains quiet, almost motionless but for a hard swallow, chin still balanced on the tip of Mason's shoe.

"You don't look like much of a guard dog," Mason considers, dropping his foot and leaning low over Will instead. "Especially not for someone like our *good friend* Hannibal here." Gloved fingers sink into Will's cheeks, to tilt his head one way and then the other. "There's no bite in you. Hardly even a *bark*. Plenty of whining but who's going to be scared of that."

He releases him with a shove to the floor and folds his arms over himself, one hand against his mouth. Mason has always had a sense for when things are amiss - when there's too much blood, when the Metropolitans need to bust heads for their ledgers. It's kept him out of jail, to scent danger on the wind despite the influx of chemicals singing merrily through his veins.

It's kept him alive.

His eyes narrow.

"Who did you meet with, Will?"

Will swallows.

"Soudan Français," he ventures, pulling from anything he remembers in his history lessons to use as a distraction. He knows with confidence that at least Hannibal will be aware of what and where he means, even if Mason will not. "I was there as a witness," Will continues. "Providing security in knowledge and understanding of a transaction rather than muscle. I -"

He lowers his eyes, tries to act demure, ashamed, repentant.

"I speak the language. Hannibal needed me there to make sure they did not cheat us on a deal. That there were two of us on each side to close it."

"And did you?" Mason drawls. Will's brows furrow gently. He looks up again. "Close it?"

Will offers a gentle smile and bites his lip. "I don't understand business, Mason, I'm not so clever. You would need to ask Hannibal of the specifics but -"

"I'm asking *you*," comes the reply, carried on a pleasant, terrifying smile. "You speak whatever it is those savages do, tell me what you heard. You do not have to *understand* to *recite*, Will, and I want you to do that for me."

Will wonders if he knows. If he knows already and is simply playing with him, like a cat does a mouse. Like two cats - he can feel Hannibal at his back.

"Four shipments a year, with stops in Fez and Madrid, where we need a courier if we want to do business," Will recites, swallows. "From there to Calais, and across to London."

It requires a concentrated effort for Hannibal to resist smiling when the boy speaks, overcome by a particular pride in his cleverness, his scholastic aptitude. He wishes it mattered as much to Mason, who unfurls from his seat to stand, a spectre in white, hair wild and eyes much more so, wide and unblinking behind his glasses.

“Well,” he chirps, “that is a good deal, then, isn’t it, Hannibal?”

“It could be,” allows Hannibal, as restrained as ever, hands folded behind his back as though at attention. A beat passes, and he pushes. “What troubles you, Mason?”

The boy-king of Bethnal Green raises his eyes from Will, watching Hannibal over the top of his glasses. A glassy stare, as though half-awake and half-dreaming lingers for a moment too long before his lips curve into a slow smile.

“A great *many* things,” he answers softly. There are lies here, obvious ones that hurt Mason’s eyes like the reflection off fresh-fallen snow, smothering and heavy, claustrophobic in this place beneath the drifts. They will suffocate him, he knows this, he can feel their hands around his throat - Hannibal, and the one on the floor. His attention turns to it again. The snow of their obstructions only serve to distract, to blind, to hide away the filth teeming beneath it and make it appear clean.

“This means I’ll just have to dig a little deeper,” Mason says to himself, with no explanation offered as to the half-thoughts that fall curious from his lips. He lifts his foot and presses it to Will’s shoulder, a firm nudge to turn Will onto his back. The boy goes and doesn’t rise again, forcing his eyes wide, his lips parted, subservient and soft, even as Mason lowers his foot against Will’s throat, and holds it there with a steady pressure, just the wrong side of too hard.

“How many languages do you speak, Hannibal?”

Not even a glance is spared the boy. Hannibal merely blinks.

"Several."

A hum, and obviously more pressure added to Will's throat, judging by the way his lips part in pain and only a choked sound comes out.

"How *many*."

"Six."

"And you want *me* to believe you took this little shit with *you*, to a *business* meeting, because you didn't speak the language? Hannibal, please." Mason tilts his head, as though hurt by the lie. Beneath him, Will makes another soft sound of discomfort. "You murmur that crap to him whenever you're in the same room, making bedroom eyes at *my puppy*. Do not. Do. *Not*. Tell me. That you needed him to *translate*."

A gasp from Will and Mason removes his foot long enough to kick Will in the stomach, hard enough to wind, before setting his shoe to his throat again and turning expectant eyes to Hannibal.

"There are certain dialects -"

"Bullshit!" Mason's eyes have widened, already half-mad with the lies he can feel gagging in his throat. "If there are, I suppose there are, one way or another, but how the fuck would this thing know it?"

Will mewls and Mason slowly turns back to him. How he restrains himself from crushing the boy’s windpipe is beyond any of them. Perhaps his need to make someone pay outweighs that someone being Hannibal. He will punish the boy, deal with his partner later.

"He was at a boarding school, did you ask him which?" Hannibal calmly continues.

"Why does it matter to me *which*?" Mason spits.

Hannibal tilts his head with a hum. "It matters when it is run by the French. They are taught the language and history. Most are dark-skinned nuns from the continent, Mason, the dialects mix. I don't know them. This boy does."

"How the hell do you know about his *school*?"

"I asked."

"Secrets on top of secrets," Mason sighs, eyes rolling towards the ceiling as though some help might come to him from the heavens. He heaves another kick into Will's ribs and the boy doubles over with a cry that to Hannibal's ears sounds wet.

His jaw tenses, but he does not remove his eyes from Mason.

"What else have you two talked about, when I'm not around? Or when I am around, in all your languages." Mason flutters a hand through the air in irritation, a dark scarlet painted

across his pale cheeks in anger made visible. "How much time do you two spend together? You seem to know him quite well, *Hannibal*, tell me what I already know."

Hannibal's tongue parts his lips and he opens his hands from behind his back, palms out, to show there are no knives there, no blades that Mason can see as real as if they were glinting in front of him.

"If you already know, Mason, then there is nothing more to say. I have explained to you the truth of it, and if that is not eno-"

"It is *not* enough!" Mason explodes, the first burst of gunpowder igniting, searing its way to a warehouse of the stuff stored and hoarded deep inside of him. He can feel it, scalding hot, fed by his own conviction. He hesitates, the air sucked from his lungs in the immolation, and then breathes out slowly to release what's left.

"If I kill him, will you stop me?"

It's a sing-song question, playing at hop-scotch as he hunches down to crouch over Will, a soft hand in his hair that snatches his curls up suddenly. Hannibal does not speak for a moment, hardly breathes, and lets nothing show in his face but the same patient annoyance he has worn since he arrived.

"No."

"No," Mason echoes. "No, you wouldn't. It would erase what you've done then, wouldn't it? Neatly sweep it away, wash it off into the river to parts unknown, untraceable. No, you wouldn't stop me, because you don't care about him except that he's *mine*."

A pause, a blink, and a sudden uproarious laugh.

"You've always been so *jealous*, Hannibal, of the things I give you - taking and taking and *taking*. Tell me, puppy," Mason says, lowering his voice to a stage whisper and bringing Will close against him, nearly cheek to cheek, eyes fixed on Hannibal. "Has he taken you?"

Will scrabbles his hands against the ground to find balance and finds none, held at too awkward an angle to be able to sit, he just watches Mason with wide eyes dark from pain.

"He took me," he gasps, "with him to meet the men from Sudan, Mason please -"

A slap, hard, and another, another, until Will brings up his hands in defense and cries out when they are yanked away. Mason's expression looks livid, shocked, almost, that Will would attempt to hide from what he feels is entirely earned punishment.

"You lying little *beast*, I can check, you know. And it will be so *much* worse for you if you lie."

"I'm not lying, Mason, I -"

"How will you check?" Hannibal's words override Will's despite him having kept it just as smooth and quiet as before. "You have him every day. You mark him and leave him that

way."

"Are you -" Mason's words cut short on a harsh laugh, eyes flying wide again. "Are you *arguing* with me? Hannibal, are you? Are you *truly*?"

A rough flick of his wrist throws Will to the ground again as Mason stands, flinging his arms into the air.

"Am I going *insane*?" he demands, laughing louder before he claps his hands against his thighs and drops his head. "I must be, I must have, yes, for this to have *happened* like this."

Without a glance, he steps over Will to reach Hannibal, standing toe-to-toe with him, shorter by enough that he's forced to crane his neck to meet his eyes from so near, but doing so unabashed. He may be smaller, but the whirlwind ferocity in Mason is a force of nature, whipping cruel through his words.

"Was he that good for you, Hannibal? Good enough to make you forget who your friends are, it seems. But I can't have this, you know, I can't have *interlopers* causing discord with my business partners. Get him off the floor, *God*!"

Exasperated, he watches as Hannibal's fingers close hard around Will's arm and jerk him to his feet. Every expression - there are none, for Hannibal - every movement is watched, followed, tracked, as if by a cobra, swaying slightly on his feet, before Mason turns to them, hand across his mouth.

"You know," he muses, ignoring the sounds of genuine alarm, of pain that fill Will's sighs with moans, clutching his ribs. Mason tucks a finger beneath the boy's chin, and for a moment, appears all too human. There is a sadness there, a confusing feeling for Mason, who cannot remember ever having felt this before, this peculiar pang. Something like it, perhaps, when unconsciousness would come on too fast for himself in the throes of drugs, in another beneath the throes of his cruelty, a feeling of something enjoyable ending sooner than perhaps it should.

It freezes over slowly in the ice of his eyes, and in the chill of his words.

"You know," he begins again. "I never let them live as long as you. Rarely a night, maybe another day if I'm particularly enjoying it. But you - you I might have kept." Mason cups Will's cheek in his palm, lips thinning as he shakes his head. "All good things must blah blah *blah*, right? And more's the *goddamn* shame for it." A sigh, and he pats the boy on the cheek. "Bring him to the cellar, Hannibal."

Another wail, and Will holds his breath as Hannibal pulls him to the door. His boots drag against the wood even when he scrambles to set them to walk, and he finds himself leaning more weight against the man when Mason can't explicitly see them. His ribs feel on fire, his eyes are hot already, and when he exhales it's with a cry he finds near impossible to swallow back down.

The cellar is almost entirely empty, packed dirt and a cold metal door, and Hannibal shoves him to the ground to save Will being thrown there. Will immediately curls into a shaking ball

and waits, knees drawn close, eyes up from beneath his hair.

Hannibal had promised that he would quiet this anger, that he would spare Will the worst of it. He isn't angry, he finds, he wishes he was. He just tries not to think of the hot kisses and whispered promises.

"I didn't," Will insists softly, when Mason calmly follows them into the room. "He took me to see the Sudanese and then brought me back to you. I didn't - we -"

Mason hums long at the word, lifting a finger to silence Will from saying more, anything, that follows that particular pronoun. He grimaces, brows knitting, in a fleeting discomfort of that irritating feeling rising again.

“I know you,” he finally says, his voice soft. “I know your body. Should I check? I’m going to check. Hannibal - “

“No,” Will seethes, teeth clenched. He won’t feel Hannibal undress him here, not against the floor, not for Mason to watch after those same hands had hours before run the length of his body, held his flushed frame eagerly close. Hannibal raises a brow.

“Are you confessing something, Will?” Mason asks, hand raised towards Hannibal to ensure he keeps his mouth shut.

“I’ve nothing to confess,” the boy responds, dragging himself up to sit enough that he can work his trembling fingers over the buttons on his shirt, breath falling in ragged little gasps from the pain that drives deep into his sides. It almost sounds like it’s laughing, Mason considers, watching with interest when Will meets his eyes and offers only a distant, sad sort of smile. “Let me do it for you.”

Sadness, yes, that *is* the sensation that Mason feels curling slow amongst the heat of anger, a feeling that twists in him like the look across Will’s face. A curious thing, studied for a moment in much the same way a dog might respond to hearing music - passing interest, and then a general disregard.

“Quickly,” Mason murmurs, wandering back towards Hannibal and motioning for a cigarette. “Bend over when you’re done. I want to look at you.”

Will’s fingers work fast, discarding his shirt before kicking his boots off with his toes and gasping as he slides the pants off next.

He is a canvas of pain. Blues and purples from bruises and bites, fringed yellow on the edges. He knows Hannibal takes great care to only mark him where he is already marked, to press bruises darker where they’re fading. To reclaim him that way if he cannot have him any other.

From above him, Will smells the familiar sting of sharp tobacco and glances up. Mason has his fingers pressed to his eyes beneath his glasses, cigarette balanced between the first and second, and Hannibal watches him. For a brief second his eyes skim to Will, take him in again and look away.

Will gasps in pain as he sits up again and moves to all fours, eyes up to the man who doesn't even look at him before bending to obey.

It is frightening the way Mason hones in on obedience, moves only when Will has complied with his demands, sets his hand to run palm-flat down his back so Will can feel the filter there, the promise of pain should he disobey now. Cold fingers press against a bruise, fresh and dark, against Will's hip and Will gasps in pain.

"I didn't give you that," Mason murmurs, bringing the cigarette to his lips to take a drag, deliberate and slow.

"You did," Will whispers, trembling, swallowing hard and continuing when Mason seems prepared to listen. "Before you whipped me, you wanted to taste my skin," he reminds him. "Yesterday."

He doesn't mention how Hannibal had darkened it the same night, pressing teeth and lips against it to taste Will just the same. Mason makes a sound and flicks his cigarette. Will lets out a slow breath when he feels just warm ash against his skin, in the dip of his back. He stays splayed and bent, cold and in pain, and waits.

I need time enough to secure our interests, Hannibal had told him, in those early morning hours when their promises fell to planning, softness to scheming. *My own, and his that I will make my own. It may as well be mine for the work I've done to keep his den afloat.*

"Bend *over*," Mason snarls, shoving Will's shoulders to the ground, his face against the dirt. He follows the plane of his back, the lovely muscles stretched and bruised far deeper than just the marks on his pale skin, and finally gloved fingers spread him, rough.

A little longer, Will.

Mason clucks his tongue, and Will shivers at the sound of it.

"I certainly didn't do *that* last night."

Will chokes down a swallow, lips parting in an urgent whisper. "You did," he insists softly. "Not last night, but the night before. I bled on the sheets and you struck me for it."

A hum, as Mason works his fingers against Will, unconvinced.

"You've been a bad puppy again, haven't you?"

Patience.

Will gasps, digs his fingers into the dirt to ground himself and closes his eyes tight. He aches. So keenly he could cry from it, like the boy he is, like any other boy would.

"I've missed my master," he pleads softly, voice youthful and high, desperate. Perhaps he can distract him, take his ire until the man tires of it, tires of him and discards him for another day. He knows he will cry then, already so tired and sore.

"I missed Mason," he whines, honeyed tone and a deeper arch in his back. His ribs throb in time with his heart, quick strikes of red against his eyelids, over and over.

Mason makes a sound, pleased, to see Will bared and spread and groveling for his affection. He likes it when it acts like this, something genuine in its desire for kindness, or perhaps simply a desire to not be hurt. Releasing him from where he has held him spread, Mason runs his gloved hand back up Will's back, dusting off the ash from his skin, and rubbing a slow circle along the base of his spine.

"Hush," he whispers, crouched alongside the boy. "Hush your whining, little puppy."

A glance to Hannibal, inscrutable, and Mason's eyes narrow before he turns back to Will and rubs a little higher, up to tight muscles and fraught shoulders. It's a comfort he rarely offers, to be so gentle, his fondness briefly transparent, like moth wings against a flame.

And like those frail wings, it immolates.

"Is that why you let him fuck you?"

The question hangs in the cold silence of the cellar.

"Is that why you let Hannibal fuck you, Will?"

Will nearly sobs. There are no words that will calm this man to sense. And worse, he speaks truth where Will is blatantly lying. For a moment he wants nothing more than for this to end, to admit everything and allow the man to beat him to death. Perhaps he will lose consciousness and go faster.

He could give up the trust between Hannibal and himself for mercy that would not last.

Or he could wait.

Patience.

He could wait and allow his mercy to come at the large, rough, warm hands that promised so much.

"He didn't," Will whimpers quietly. "He never tried, Mason..."

He turns his head to look at Mason properly, bites his lip.

"I did, when I missed you. Pushed my fingers deep but it never felt the same." He can feel his cheeks reddening with humiliation and hopes Mason reads it as arousal. He can almost feel the ire of the older man behind him, knows that he wants nothing more than to claim Will right here, take and possess and prove he belongs to no other.

And Will wonders, for a brief and frightening moment, why either think he belongs to them.

He should not belong to anyone.

He shouldn't want to.

"Hannibal never fucked me," he breathes.

Mason listens, much as he can, lips pressed into a thin line before this tension too releases. His hand rubs warm across Will's tired shoulders, and he delights for a moment in feeling its whole body quake beneath him, from exhaustion, from fear, from pain upon pain and now this, holding himself against the ground, exposed.

"You know what I do to liars, don't you?"

When Will turns his eyes back to Mason, he sees that the older boy is no longer watching him, but watching Hannibal instead. A long silence passes, room enough for Mason to answer his own question, and only when he does not, does Hannibal answer instead. Careful tones, but not soft enough to be construed as less than strong, cautious to steer away from anything that could be heard as patronizing.

"Things far worse than death," Hannibal agrees, lighting a cigarette as much to still his own twitching hands as to have the taste itself. "The boy and I have both spoken truth to you, Mason. If you wish to hurt him, you will regardless of what anyone else says."

"Yes."

"And so you have whatever answer you wish. Mine, his, and your own. Whether or not any one of them affects the others is beyond my care."

It is a curt statement, enough to make Mason blink in surprise. He watches Hannibal at length, eyes narrowing again in scrutiny. He knows there is more here, like ghosts - like smoke - in the air between them all, and he knows that Hannibal has lied at least once today, if only by omission. He looks back to the boy beneath his hand, spreads his fingers through Will's hair, and bends him back enough to bring their mouths together. It is hardly a kiss, lips gliding against the other, just enough that Mason can breathe in the gasps of pain that break in whimpers from Will's mouth against his own.

Mason rises, releasing Will from his grasp, and turns to walk. He pauses by Hannibal, their gaze held on the other for an instant too long, before he continues on his way, pulling his coat tightly around himself again.

"Make sure he can't leave again."

Trickery

Chapter Summary

> Hannibal knows that in this moment, Will fears him more than the man upstairs, and the thought turns his stomach. He swallows hard, and his arms tighten firmer around Will.
>
> “He will kill you, without hesitation, if I do not do as he says.”

“Will.”

The boy is small, looks smaller still coiled on the packed earth. He rolls until his back is towards Hannibal, and the older man’s lips twist in a pale grimace. He tries not to notice as Will draws tighter in on himself as Hannibal approaches, just as he tries not to hear the breaths hitched with such frequency that it’s a wonder he hasn’t fallen into unconsciousness from it.

“Will,” Hannibal breathes again, crouching beside the prone form and resting a hand against his bare shoulder.

Will flinches, makes a soft sound and almost vibrates beneath Hannibal’s hand, for the first time entirely terrified of the man behind him and his intent. Hannibal has never seen Will shy from his hand before, never like this. It stirs something deep within him he can’t ignore, and he draws a warm palm down Will’s trembling, cool skin.

"Hannibal -"

Weak, frightened, the word shakes as though Will is about to lose his composure, lose the thing that makes Hannibal's boy so remarkable. For a moment he is just a seventeen year-old boy, frightened of the man about to hurt him.

"Please, don't, please... I don’t... I..."

Hannibal says nothing in response to the pained pleas - there is nothing to say. The sound of them burns. For all the torments Mason has visited on Will, the times Hannibal has looked on the decimation left across his body, he has never heard him like this, lost to fear that sends him trembling under his touch.

Working an arm underneath him, Hannibal hoists the boy against him and sits back on the cold ground, pulling Will away from it, into warmth. Slight arms sling around his neck, and Hannibal closes his eyes.

“Breathe,” he whispers against Will’s hair, still smelling sweetly of the soap he used at Hannibal’s home. “Breathe, Will.”

He suppresses the uncertain waver in his own words, setting his jaw stern and his hands softly against Will's back to rub heat into him, some kind of comfort, he hopes, but he knows he has none truly to offer. Not for this boy who suffers so much for him already, who has become just that - a boy, scared beyond words. Who feels so small in Hannibal's arms that it pulls heat to his eyes.

Hannibal knows that in this moment, Will fears him more than the man upstairs, and the thought turns his stomach. He swallows hard, and his arms tighten firmer around Will.

"He will kill you, without hesitation, if I do not do as he says."

Whatever had been holding Will together at that point, whatever dam, whatever power, snaps so harshly that Will physically jerks with it, and he begins to cry.

Messy, childish tears that Hannibal has never seen his boy make, sounds that belong to a much younger boy, much weaker and softer, not wise beyond his years like Will is, not clever and manipulative, powerful and fierce. No. These are the tears of a little boy lost and terrified, and still clinging to Hannibal for help.

"Don't break me," he sobs, voice high, broken up by heavy sobs and thick hot tears. "Please don't tear me apart for him. Not at his word, not for his pleasure, Hannibal, please."

Skinny arms wrap tighter around him and he wails, shaking, works his body to such a state he loses all rhythm to his breathing, convulses with the need to retch, twists and struggles against Hannibal's hold until the other snares Will by the hair simply to hold him still so he does not do himself harm.

"If you want," Will chokes, "if you want to see me suffer then I will, I promise I will, for you, I will hold still and you can break any bone in my body, you can break all of them, but not here, please don't make me suffer so here, please don't do it because he said, Hannibal, please, please!"

And from the mouths of babes, the truth of it, the churning in Hannibal's belly given sharp definition. It is not that he is incapable of hurting people - he certainly is that, and worse than mere broken bones - but the context, the context changes it all. Asked to hurt Will, his Will - for he is that, they both know - for the delight of a wretched man-child whom he despises.

The sound-memory of cartilage tearing, the crack of bone grits Hannibal's teeth together, and he turns his cheek against Will's hair. He could make it as painless as possible, a quick twist of rough hands to snap a bone out of place, dislocate, damage the ligaments that bind them without ruining them - perhaps enough to please Mason.

He could set it quickly back in place, keep it still and supported, force Will to need time to heal - perhaps enough to please Mason.

Injured and in pain, his body trying to stitch itself back together, while suffering whatever unfathomable torments Mason would arrange for him in that time - perhaps enough to please Mason.

Perhaps, perhaps, perhaps.

It will never be enough.

“I am not his dog,” Hannibal snarls against Will’s ear, fingers curled fierce in his hair, against his back. “I would not hurt you this way for my own pleasure, I will not do it for his.”

Another choke and Will falls entirely pliant against the man, weakened by tears and terror, curling in his lap to be as small as possible, to allow himself to be protected by the man he usually bites and claws and tears at for his own amusement, for Hannibal's.

The shivers subside, the breathing evens to a slow ebb and pull of air to Will's lungs, until he licks his lips and turns to nuzzle under Hannibal's jaw, a trust there so deep he would have blindly offered his body to damage if Hannibal had desired it.

For him, he would have suffered.

"I won't let him kill me," he sighs, and the conviction Hannibal knows holds the boy up as surely as his bones do is returned heavy to his tone, no longer watered down by tears.

"But he will need something, regardless." A sigh, a soft hand still trembling with adrenaline up to wipe the treacherous tears away. Will considers, chews his lip before nodding, clearing his throat and unfolding one leg free to rest pale and fragile against the cold earth.

"There," he says, "teach me how to move as though you have broken me there."

Hannibal’s hand spreads across the boy’s leg, runs from his warm thighs down across a knobby knee, along his thin calf. He kisses Will’s hair, presses his cheek against it, as his own body uncoils in time with Will’s.

“He did not insist that I break it,” Hannibal considers, still rubbing slowly up and down Will’s leg. “Merely that I ensure you are unable to walk from here again.”

He catches Will’s ankle in his hand, pinching the Achilles tendon between his fingers.

“Here. Severed, you are unable to put weight on that leg, it will not support you if this tendon is cut. In reality, doing so furls it like a scroll up the back of the leg, but he will not know that. He is a fool.”

Hannibal lifts his hands to cradle Will’s face in them, kissing his mouth, his cheek, his throat, beneath his chin, ardent whispers fueled by knowing that, at least in this, he has kept his boy safe.

“A small cut, not deep enough to nick the thing itself, but enough that I can lay stitches in it and wrap it. You will smoke, as much as you can stand at first, as though the pain is unbearable - let the smoke overwhelm you. Should he unwrap the bandages, he will see the cut. Should he force you to walk, a crutch, perhaps, but put no weight on that foot without agony.”

Another kiss, snaring Will’s mouth beneath his own, deep and heady until he parts gasping.

“Do you understand?”

"Yes." It's breathless but no longer wavering, entirely Will once more, body pliant in trust but tense in conviction, kissing back just as ardently, just as deeply as Hannibal seeks.

He can pretend. Can smoke and stumble and sob, bare himself shaking to the man upstairs as he takes his pleasure from Will's suffering.

He can.

He will.

"Beautiful boy." Another kiss, fingers tight in Will’s hair as his other hand slides up his thigh again, intimate and possessive, and Will spreads his thighs to straddle Hannibal instead. The man who would be his undoing or his making.

The man he would willingly bend himself to breaking for.

"Remarkable boy." Another smile, and Will bites his lip, grins, tilts his head to hear Hannibal as he whispers, "I need you to scream for me."

And without a word, with trust so deep Will can go into it blind, he swallows thick, ducks his head to part his lips against the man’s shoulder, to muffle, to contort the sound.

And screams.

The longer Will’s cry lasts, shaking the dust from the scaffolds and rattling the urchins from an already-nervous sleep, the more Mason’s smile grows and the easier his breath finds him again.

It sounds like loyalty, like the blast of horns and thud of marching feet.

Mason is certain he’s never heard a sound more beautiful. He slumps back against the basement door, head tilted against the aged wood to try and hear more - whimpers perhaps, pleas even after the deed has been done - and frowns a little when there is nothing. Weak little things always faint far too quickly, he knows well enough by now, but at least this one did not do it in anticipation of the act itself.

There’s relief in that, at least. It’s always such a disappointment when they go before you’ve even properly touched them.

The door pushes against Mason and he blinks, bewildered, before stepping away from it to beam at Hannibal as the man emerges.

“Where is it? I want my puppy where I can see it,” Mason demands, tagging along beside Hannibal as the man’s long strides carry him towards the stairs, and up, unhurried.

“At present, bleeding,” answers Hannibal.

"*Bleeding!*," Mason laughs, a childish delight. "Why, why is it *bleeding*? You don't bleed from broken bones, Hannibal, I know that."

Without allowing his jaw to tighten - maintaining a quiet neutrality - Hannibal pulls open a drawer unfilled yet with Mason's clothes, and sifts through the meager medical supplies that he has slowly brought in, piece by piece.

"I did not break them."

"You - you did *not* break them," echoes Mason, draping himself against the chest of drawers and kicking the open one closed with his heel. He nearly catches Hannibal's fingers, and eyes narrowed over his glasses as Hannibal snatches them away.

"No," the man answers, drawing a patient breath before opening the drawer again. "Would you wish for a cripple in your bed, Mason? Bent limbs ill-repaired, snarled and in pain, unable to move without your assistance? Or merely a puppy gone lame, unable to venture from your confines?"

Mason's lips twist in thought, bringing a gloved hand against his mouth. "But I heard him *scream*."

"Is that not what you wanted?"

"Oh," laughs Mason. "It is *exactly* what I wanted. And you - you are *just* the man I wanted to do it. But what did you *do*?" he drawls, leaning low over the drawer to peer inside. "And where did all this come from? What is it? I didn't ask for this."

The next breath Hannibal takes is held until the desire passes to grasp Mason by his jaw, and turn his neck until his head comes free. He lets himself envision it, imagines the crunch of cartilage and grinding bone, and finally sighs.

"I have severed a tendon necessary to walk. There is no more required than that. He will not put weight on that foot again, and a one-legged boy cannot run far from you," he murmurs, before adding, with mild displeasure, "nor accompany me on business meetings, to which he was well-suited as you yourself have seen."

"*Hannibal*," sighs Mason, drawing his name out the entire length of his breath. "*Please*. Can't we just be happy that everything is *fine* now? He can't misbehave, and you've shown me where your *priorities* lie. It's an important lesson for everyone, *really*, don't you agree?"

He extends a hand, stroking the back of his gloved fingers across Hannibal's cheek as the man sifts through the drawer to take up a suturing needle and thread, bandages and a cocain cream for the pain. Though the thought occurs that perhaps he could bite clean through the leather of Mason's gloves, and remove the fingers that touch him now, he merely remains crouched, allowing it to linger until Mason pushes away from the dresser to find a cigarette from his desk.

He seems contented enough to allow Hannibal to gather his things in peace, now, unhindered when he returns downstairs to the basement, door closed once more.

"He may come down to watch," Hannibal warns lowly, finding Will as he had left him, leg stretched out, the boy himself in a pliant sprawl on the cold floor, covered by his clothes but not in then.

"Let him." Will is frowning, tear tracks still drying on his face from earlier where he had not managed to wipe them all clean, watching the cut Hannibal had made - small, deep enough to genuinely sting - bleed into the ground. He looks up when Hannibal approaches, adjusts himself to rest up on his elbows as the man kneels, unperturbed by the blood, to take up Will's foot and rest it in his lap.

"You cut so deep I thought you would actually do it," Will tells him softly, feels Hannibal gently stroke his leg in reassurance before taking up a cloth to clean the blood from the cut. Not a precise clean, enough to see where the skin has parted as he threads the needle next.

"Would you think me capable?" Hannibal asks, and finds that Will's expression is unwavering when he replies.

"More than."

It's an answer that would usually draw such pleasure from Hannibal, yet now it sounds like a betrayal, a change he had not anticipated or wanted, in his boy. For long moments they are quiet, then he sets a hand soft against Will's calf.

"Try to hold as still as you can."

Will does, jerking at the initial stab of the needle, hissing as he feels the follow through. It hurts, just as raw and cruel as the cut itself had been, and he allows himself to press to the ground again, dig his nails into the dirt and softly wail as he hears footsteps approach the door. It is easy enough to act in pain when something genuinely hurts, and easier still to raise his voice and play it up.

The door opens and Will is shaking, sobbing into his grubby hands as Hannibal puts him back together again, and Mason looks on.

"Now isn't this a pretty picture?" the older boy croons, taking one slow step at a time, lingering on each as he takes in the sight of Will unclothed and scarcely covered, the blood on Hannibal's hands, the tears smeared with dirt against pale cheeks.

His feet find the floor and he ruffles into his coat, drawing it up high around his jaw. "It's like a family portrait," he laughs, and Hannibal's lips thin at the surprisingly earnest declaration.

"I need to focus," he intones softly. The muscles beneath his eyes draw up as he presses the needle through the boy's thin skin again, a *pop* more felt than heard before the susurrus of suture pulls slowly through again. Will presses a dirty hand to his face, smearing through his tears, and whimpers through clenched teeth.

Prowling closer, Mason crouches beside Will. "How *can* you when it's making such lovely little *noises*?" Gloved fingers pry free his hand from his face and Mason replaces it with his

own, framing the boy's cheek. His chin lifts with a shiver of pleasure as Will nuzzles against the tender touch. "Beautiful boy."

Will startles at the familiar words said by an unfamiliar voice, heart shuddering violent in his chest as he looks from Mason's face, to that of the man at his ankle. A wounded bird, wing now broken, descended upon by two wildcats who only cease their pursuit of devouring him whole to slash and snarl at each other. His breath shortens, tightening as if his lungs were growing smaller with every breath, and Hannibal frowns up at him.

"You will make him faint again," he murmurs. Mason does not appear to hear.

"Did you know that Hannibal is a doctor?" Mason asks Will instead, raising his other hand to stroke the boy's hair. "*Was* a doctor?"

It's clear enough to see that he was, but Will finds that just gasping, turning, shivering in pain is enough of an answer for Mason - he doesn't need much more to keep talking. Another sharp pain and Will parts his lips in a silent wail, digging his fingers harder into the dirt.

He knows that at least after this he can smoke himself into a stupor, knows that in this, Hannibal will not be argued with. He wonders if he really can work himself to a faint by holding his breath. Will finds that he fears too much what would be done to him in his vulnerable, helpless state to even try.

"Hurts," he sobs instead, pretending that he isn't listening, that he is incapable.

Mason inches closer, and finally settles against the packed earth behind Will, legs crossed. He rests the boy's head in his lap, stroking fondly against Will's cheek, looking with excitement between the boy gone pallid beneath him, and Hannibal swearing - the tone is unmistakable - in another language at the boy's feet.

"Do not move him," he snarls. "It is hard enough to suture upside down without that."

"*Tone*," responds Mason, a twitch of displeasure in his expression, before he drops his eyes back to Will. "I know it hurts, puppy. I mean, I know it *must* hurt. I don't know *directly* but I can certainly imagine it hurts quite a lot. You know, if you were a horse, instead of a puppy, I'd have to take you out and shoot you," he laughs loudly, smoothing Will's hair back from his face.

"Nearly done," murmurs Hannibal. "Two more, and I will wrap it. He will need a pipe, Mason, and rest. Can you give him that at least?"

"You see?" Mason continues, leaning lower over Will, close enough to brush their noses together. "A very *good* doctor, apparently. Despite all those patients that went *missing*..."

"He will need *rest*, Mason. And you will let him," Hannibal near snarls, working an intricate knot with the needle before snipping the excess off and setting the needle away. Will parts his lips in pain at the ache, feels Mason so close - too close - and works on clouding his own mind with anything he can think of to avoid that proximity.

His leg is cleaned, around the new stitches he didn't even need, a salve applied that soothes and cools and Will shakes in Mason’s hold as the bandage is finally applied, snug enough to support his ankle, though he remembers not to add weight to his leg at all - as per Hannibal's word.

"And so many of them went missing..." Mason continues, a sing-song lilt, amusement and something darker beneath. "Imagine if *you* had. One minute Mason has you, safe and sound, and the next -" He snaps his fingers, grinning as Will jerks at the sound. "No more puppy. You know Mason would miss you, puppy, very much."

Will nods, what else can he do? But he considers the words. Missing. People missing and never recovered. Somehow the news is not jarring to him, though something nags at the back of his mind, a cloying, whining beast there that tells him to be wary.

"I need to be sick," he whimpers, dizzy, dry-mouthed and throbbing all over in pain. The declaration is enough to have Mason shift just slightly away, though Will knows he will not be out of that man's sight for days. A heaving sound, clicking softly in his throat, is all Will needs for Mason to finish currying away to stand again, dusting off his trousers with quick slaps of his hand.

Lowering Will’s heel gently to the ground, Hannibal’s eyes do not yet leave Mason, a warning in them that in his stillness carries far deeper than those growled threats he presses against Will’s ear.

“Bring him upstairs, will you? I’ll make one of the orphans bring him up a pipe. Does he need to eat?”

“He will,” answers Hannibal softly.

“Make them do that too, then. Lazy little monsters,” Mason mutters behind his hand, the other placed against his hip, watching Will with something like concern, or what Mason imagines concern might look like. There isn’t much mess, all tidied up and bandaged now, though the boy himself is covered in dirt and at this, Mason huffs a sigh. “And clean him up. I won’t have a filthy bed, you know that.”

Hannibal’s fists only loosen at his sides when Mason has ascended the stairs again, and he bends to scoop Will from the floor, cradled across his arms. A tired smile lifts the corners of his eyes, a breath warm against Will’s brow where he kisses him and lets his lips linger.

“You are extraordinary. And you will be, more so,” he whispers. “Soon. And then we will be free.”

Compromise

Chapter Summary

> It's a good distraction.
>
> Enough that Will can drop his hands back as though aiming to display himself more, fingers seeking carefully around the headboard until they grasp the end of the thin leash that hangs there.
>
> A moment, two, before Will makes a particularly pleasant noise and Mason closes his eyes to relish it. And Will wraps the leash around his neck and pulls.

Will wakes to warm fingers against his ankle, splaying and shifting before moving to run over the stitches - now healed, after a week of keeping them clean and wrapped - and the calf above. He sighs, buries his face in the pillows and opens his eyes. It’s very early morning, dawn creeping but not yet here, the den is emptying, he can hear people shuffling around downstairs.

He feels the weight shift on the bed behind him and curls his shoulders with a sigh before stretching, like a cat, fingers splayed and wrists together, back bending to press his stomach to the mattress before he relaxes.

Now there are two hands against him, just as warm, just as curious, probing to check for infection, to see if they will bleed if twisted wrong. Will smiles, wipes it against his arm to push himself onto his elbows with a look, instead, of sleepy curiosity.

“Mason?”

“Does it hurt?”

With such soft-spoken fascination, Mason sounds as young as he truly must be, Will supposes, after long enough near him. Several years older than himself, perhaps, and prone still to bouts of whimsy worsened by the madness that pervades the very air around him as dizzying as the smoke that pours from his pipes. What may once have been the curious spirit of an artist, a composer, a bon vivant has been warped irreparably by nothing more than simply being born into a mind that favors pain in place of beauty, and destruction over creation.

His hands are bare, a rare mood indeed, fingernails catching deliberately to hook against the sutures that hold Will’s wound closed. Pale eyes brighten at the way the skin moves with them when they catch, and his grin spreads.

“If I pulled on them, would it hurt more?”

Will makes a weak sound as his only reply. For days Mason has played with the stitches there, pulled and stroked and spread the blood over them before Hannibal had scolded him away to clean them. It seems that beyond the added bonus of Will apparently never walking again, the extra pain these cause him are Mason's new vice.

"It hurts now," Will tells him gently, shifts to rest his hip against the sheets, turning his leg in Mason's hand just a little. "You will make them bleed again. You hate a messy bed, Mason."

Childish, sleepy, a coy little seductive creature. In truth, the pain is not intense, it is rather an irritation, itchy more than aching, though the ache is always there thanks to Mason's inability to leave well enough alone.

Will braces, as he knows he must, lip held hard between his teeth as Mason's fingers skim upwards across his calf. He manages another whimper, entirely false and wholly convincing if the way that Mason shivers in pleasure is anything to go by, when Mason nears the back of his knee.

Hannibal had instructed Will carefully, describing in nauseating detail what would have happened had he actually made the cut as deeply as Mason had wished it - the way the tendons would have rolled up the back of his leg like a parchment beneath the skin, an unfathomable pain that Will can only manage now with the copious amounts of opium and bourbon that are brought to him.

"Mason," Will pleads, ducking his head against his arm, forcing a tremor through his body that pulls a loud laugh from the older boy.

"I'd be annoyed - you know, *frustrated* by how *lazy* this has made you - if you didn't make those *sounds*," he drawls.

Hannibal had told him, at the time, that broken legs would be grotesque - it would ruin the aesthetics of the boy, and he knows how much Mason values aesthetics. Mason had agreed - Hannibal being quite sound of mind, but for his little predilections - and finds himself entirely pleased with the result.

Slowly, Mason spreads his bare fingers - cool and slender - over the soft hairs of Will's thigh, and then down his calf again, pushing harder.

Will curls, bending as far into a ball as he's allowed, and softly wails, shaking as he's caressed, pulling from not so distant memories of genuine pain to immerse himself in and copy from. This would continue, long enough for Mason to get sufficiently hard before he turned the boy over to take him, rough and deep, over and over, until Mason had cum and he had forced Will to, several times.

Mostly with his fingers.

Regardless, by the end of it, Will didn't have to pretend to be in pain.

Will swallows, nuzzles against the pillow and shifts to lie on his stomach again, arches his back so his hips raise up, drop back down in a languid rub against the sheets as Will's breath

hitches and he does it again.

“You haven’t touched me there for days,” Will whines, feels Mason tense at the demanding tone before he adds, soft as anything, “I miss Mason touching me like that.”

“Greedy puppy,” answers Mason with a widening grin.

He walks his hands forward on either side of the boy spread beneath him, and digs his knees in to the inside of Will’s thighs. Leaning low, he sinks his weight heavy against Will and lays atop him, no more movement but for a steady rocking of his hips, almost involuntary. For a moment, Mason considers his gloves beside the bed. Dogs are filthy animals after all, especially ones that just lay around all day.

But this one is watching him, moving underneath him, little gyrations down against the over-stuffed mattress and back up against Mason’s own movements, and he doesn’t want the sensation to stop. So he reaches, eyes narrowed as if in warning his puppy not to snap, and when Will’s lips simply part, Mason works his fingers against them. He pushes them out of shape, splays his fingers inside to feel the slickness of Will’s inner lip, a curious searching across his teeth, his tongue, pressing against it.

His eyes grow enormous when Will presses his tongue back in return.

“Are you hungry, puppy?”

Will is almost tempted to tell the truth; Mason has not fed him for days. Hannibal has. Instead he wraps his lips around Mason’s fingers and sucks gently, letting his eyes close on an expression of genuine bliss. In moods like these, painfully rare as they are, Mason is not difficult to enjoy, so Will allows himself to.

He makes a gentle sound, feels Mason shiver above him and bends himself to press back against Mason’s cock, feeling it hardening against his ass.

Will shakes his head - not hungry.

Mason clucks his tongue softly, a disappointment threatening approach in his eyes - like far-off thunder - but it dissipates when Will’s lips part so that Mason can see his tongue spread against his finger.

“You *seem* hungry,” Mason grins. He shivers almost uncontrollably with every curl of Will’s tongue against his bare skin, his hand no less, free of the leather that normally encases it. His breath is warm against Will’s cheek as he leans up enough to brush his nose, his mouth alongside his puppy’s face. “Good boy.”

Without removing his finger from Will’s mouth, Mason leans back enough to study the fit of their bodies together, as though discovering his own suddenly and unexpectedly. A curious regard paid towards where he ruts in firm movements against Will’s bare backside - alarmingly free of bruises and bites at the moment - and his eyes drift lower still to Will’s legs. The injured one remains flat, but Mason’s attention holds on the other, raised with curled toes that stretch wide as he observes.

He grins, suddenly and inexplicably pleased by this movement, relishing the thought - for now - that it's enjoying this as much as he is, himself. A funny thought - it makes him laugh a little - to consider that something like Will could feel the same sort of pleasure as Mason.

From Mason.

"It was *nice* of Hannibal not to break your legs," Mason muses, stretched in too many directions, too many distractions - Will's mouth and his ass and his foot, which Mason decides to watch upside down, head tilting back and snowy hair wild. "It was a nice thing to *do*, Will."

Will hums agreement, does not draw his teeth over Mason's fingers as he would Hannibal's, fearing he would find himself struck for the playful gesture. He shifts, instead, bends the curve of his back deeper, slides his knee wider until he is entirely open to Mason behind him.

He doesn't care, truly, if Mason fucks him now, or if he doesn't. All Will knows is he feels more coherent, stronger, than he has for days, and that Mason thinks him entirely incapable of movement.

He pulls back from Mason's fingers, feels them trail spit over his lips before he sucks the bottom one into his mouth.

"It was a nice thing for you to let him be so kind," he responds, finally, adjusting the words carefully to stroke Mason's ego, keep him preening over his victory.

Sitting back on his knees, Mason regards his dampened finger with a moment of distress. It's wet, and it's warm, and it's not how he would prefer it to be, and there is a long and wary consideration before he wipes it off against Will's back.

"Listen to *you*," he exclaims lightly. "So *obedient*. I should have done this *months* ago."

Relieved of this brief discomfort, he reaches to grasp Will's hair - soft, recently washed at the behest of the very *nice* Hannibal who insisted on sanitary conditions and hygiene and Mason stopped listening and doesn't recall, really, because he left the room. He isn't harsh when he holds it this time, fingers curling in the dark strands and just pulling a little. And then a little more, just until Will gasps, and then Mason is careful again.

This is an injured puppy, after all, and one Mason plans to keep for a very long time.

Will adjusts to this too, to Mason touching him like a small child with a toy, over and over until he gets rougher and rougher and the toy breaks. Until Will could have. Before Hannibal had stopped him, before Mason had - for once - listened. Will tries not to think of how genuinely upset Mason had looked when he had left Will in that basement to be damaged.

"I can be good." He plays along, this, easy enough as well. "Not bite or jump up. Wag my tail because I can sleep on the bed, because you let me."

Another arch, deliberate, and Will moans softly as his hair is tugged. "Mason," he begs, gentle and sweet, entirely the little toy Mason assumes he always should be.

Tilting his head, as if in mirror to the angle at which Will is now forced to hold his own, Mason smiles, a genuine and peculiar thing, drawing his shoulders up to his jaw in a shiver of pleasure.

“What has Mason done to earn such *loyalty*? Such *good* behavior,” he sighs, snapping Will’s head a little further back when the answer doesn’t come fast enough.

A yelp as good as a wag, a bark as good as a whimper. It hardly matters so long as there is motion and sound, blood and breath, and he eases back into the languid rocking as Will answers, “You trained me to be good for you. I want to be good for Mason.”

Beautiful noise, an exquisite melody of tones that shape into words that mean things to Mason as they filter through the resin built up sticky and tar-black inside of him. He releases Will’s hair and runs his hand down the younger boy’s pale back, following the curve of his backside - no tail today, though Mason wishes for it. Drawing a breath to call for Hannibal, he decides to simply release it instead.

Later, there’s always time later, and right now he’s wedged so perfectly up against it and it’s being so kind that Mason hardly knows what to do with himself. He laughs, sudden and inexplicable, when the thought bubbles to the surface that if he hurt it very badly right now, it would be delightfully unexpected, but no, not when his limbs are so heavy and his cock is so hard. Working his fingers against the unexpected ridge in his trousers, he starts the tedious process of unbuttoning them, sighing and letting his head loll back, eyes on the ceiling.

“I didn’t know it was so *easy* to make you behave. I knew you had it *in* you - the *potential* to be a *good boy* but you’re so *stubborn*. Disobedient in a way I could not *possibly* have stood for much longer.” Mason drops his attention back to Will, letting his cock slip heavy into his fingers and pressing it against the cleft of Will’s ass, with a crooked grin. “Maybe I should neuter you, too. Really take the edge off.”

"Mason would be bored with a lifeless doll," Will drawls, stretching his hands out in front of him, and he can feel from the way Mason shifts against him, that he agrees, at least, with that. It would be pleasant, just this, a rubbing together before one impatience won over another and it became a fucking. Will tries not to think how good a fucking it would be with Hannibal instead.

He will have it soon enough.

"Can puppy watch?" Will asks suddenly, displeased at his helplessness being face down in the bed, entirely helpless and at Mason’s mercy with how events progress. He turns his head back to look at Mason again, biting his lip and widening his eyes to give him that innocent, lost look again. "Can puppy see how good he is for Mason?"

Distantly, like the smell of a match being lit rather than the sight of it, Mason experiences a flare of irritation at the questions, the whining, the *nagging* and his nose wrinkles a little, quite content it seems to remain right where he is, pressed bare against Will’s ass. But another little wiggle from Will - and the weight of the opium in his limbs - quiets the fight in him and with a languid shift of his shoulders, Mason sighs.

“Can you roll over?”

Will blinks, lips parting, but says nothing when Mason grins and asks again, “Roll over and be a good boy.”

Will doesn’t allow the relief to show on his face, takes his time compressing his body to turn, mindful of the 'leg he cannot move' as he turns himself with his hands and uses them, after, to settle the leg itself. In truth, and Hannibal had told him, he would have been able to use the limb had it been so damaged, but he would not have been able to put weight on it at all.

Regardless, Will plays up the injury, for Mason's disturbing enjoyment of watching him wince, before settling back and arching up, drawing up the knee of his good leg before letting it swing wide, opening himself to the man above him.

Mason doesn’t pay any more mind to readying Will than he ever does, a rough entry and a savage grin, though not wholly cruel, as he buries himself in the younger boy to take his fill. Every gasp, plea, and whimper is a delight for him, shivering across his skin like cold rain, cascading down Mason’s spine and curling his hips to dig deeper still. Half-bared, but gloveless, glasses still on, but eyes wide with fascination behind them, he balances on the precipice of motivating himself to greater barbarism or simply enjoying the act for what it is.

Catching Will’s chin in his hand, he forces their lips together, a smothering kiss breathless and warm, interrupted only by a pleased sound as Will curls his leg around Mason’s hip, his arms around the older boy’s neck.

It hurts, it always does, but Will rides it out as he always does, mind able to numb the pain enough to ease into some form of enjoyment of it. It is rare that Mason kisses him, usually entirely too preoccupied with his own pleasure and the marathon run to get to it. But Will accepts the kisses with soft lips and closed eyes, panting pleasure into Mason’s mouth when he can, gasping against it when he’s released.

It's a good distraction.

Enough that Will can drop his hands back as though aiming to display himself more, fingers seeking carefully around the headboard until they grasp the end of the thin leash that hangs there.

A moment, two, before Will makes a particularly pleasant noise and Mason closes his eyes to relish it. And Will wraps the leash around his neck and pulls.

Mason doesn’t realize, at first, what’s happened - he continues to thrust against Will, face flushed from the exertion of the brutal rutting, another buck of his hips, another, and gradually he slows as he finds he doesn’t have the breath to continue.

He stops.

Fingers find the leather around his neck, Will’s hands wrapped in the leash, and with a strangled cry he brings the back of his fist hard across Will’s face, delighting despite the

dizziness in the blossom of blood that erupts across the boy's face and the pillow beneath him.

A throttled curse spits past frothing lips and he snares Will's hands in his, his wrists, digging sharp nails into his skin to try to force a release, eyes alight with a fulminant fury.

Will cries out, a pain he is used to, with Mason's mood swings, and shakes his head enough to clear it, blood dripping sluggishly from his nose, over his teeth when he bares them. He can feel his entire body shaking with exertion, with the last of the adrenaline it gives him. It is the only strength he has - he hopes it's enough.

Quickly, he wraps both legs around Mason's middle, heels digging into his back to hold him close, down, still joined but unmoving, beyond Mason's bucking and flailing to get free. Will only registers the pain in his hands absently, as though it belongs to someone else.

He thinks of the whispered morning, of Hannibal's question whether or not Will had thought of killing Mason, encouraging him with soft words and softer tongue to do it himself.

Will makes a weak little sound now, exhausted body alive with tension and desire to see this end, to feel him end. It seems so close to be almost too close, his freedom, his rest, the lack of pain for as long as Hannibal allows it... but pain, there, that Will would subject himself to willingly, happily.

Not this.

His fingers are numb, slippery with sweat, but he does not let go, and Mason hisses between his teeth at the feel of Will's legs - both of them - snared around him.

"Liar," he chokes out. His nails dig into his own skin instead, grasping the leash enough to gasp down a breath and immediately shout for Hannibal, loud enough that he will be heard through the thin walls of the den, the rickety floors.

Again he swings, face scarlet and eyes bulging wide with fear and hate and anger and every ugly emotion that Mason has let flourish inside himself. The blow connects but Will turns his head as it does, taking it across his cheek and nearly laughing as he realizes how little he feels it, from the familiarity of being hit that way so many times and the numbing resin that swells to responsiveness at sudden pain. Sputtering, Mason brings his hand up again, fingers curled into a fist, and Will heaves his body upward with the strength he didn't realize still existed in him.

Icy cold with adrenaline, Will makes a feral sound, yelping, as he heaves Mason onto the bed and sits astride him.

"Roll over, Mason," he spits through clenched teeth. Wild blue eyes cast towards the door as Mason searches for Hannibal, barks another coarse cry for him, another, and the leather digs ugly into Mason's skin, strap cutting against him as Will yanks it tighter.

It Is brutal, a struggle Will had expected but the strength of which he could not anticipate. It is easier, now, astride him, though he finds hands clawed over his thighs leaving marks, down

his chest, aimed at his eyes that he avoids by yanking himself back, the strap tightening further still.

He's almost euphoric, this feeling of power, and Will feels a beast unfurl itself within him, feeding off of the pain before him, off his own. The power to control life and death, to control someone who usually holds Will himself pinned, motionless with fear and beatings and kindness in between.

He gasps, pain and pleasure mingling together in a cacophony of almost drug-induced bliss.

Then Mason twists, just enough, and Will's hand slips to the very end of the leash.

"Shit."

The euphoric sensation passes to cold, to instinctive terror - the knowledge - that he is about to die. Will makes a sound, scared, and tries to keep his grip.

"Hannibal, " Will calls, watching the wrath manifest itself on Mason's features, the understanding there, the sudden desire awoken in him to do all the harm he can manage to Will. "Hannibal!"

Mason snares Will by the throat, digging in with what shaking strength still drives through him, mindless of the door opening, of Hannibal who waited patiently outside of it and enters just as unhurried, mindless of anything but the need to see Will dead.

Both turn towards Hannibal, their vision blurred with tears, with the last pulses of blood struggling through their throats, and the older man regards them both with a hum of consideration. Will mouths his name again, too broken and too breathless to do more than rasp, and Hannibal allows the boy - *his* boy - a soft smile before reaching for Mason.

Mason's lips curl into a triumphant, deranged grin, spit-flecked and savage, and it's the expression that lingers as Hannibal twists his neck in a gesture that would be almost tender if not for the ugly crack of bone that accompanies it. Mason's fingers slip from Will's neck and he falls backwards, scrambling away with a violent cough as Hannibal lays Mason's head to rest back against the pillow.

Will can barely see, barely breathe, clawing his way towards the edge of the bed to be violently sick as coughs wrack his body with endless shivers. Not much comes up, not much is there, bile burns his nose and throat as Will's eyes run and drip tears to the floor as well. Water next to bile next to blood. Chokes turn to sobs turn to hysterical giggles, as Will sits back and wipes a hand against his lips and just laughs.

Blood smeared down his face, over his throat where Mason had grasped hard enough to bruise, down his chest… some tacky, some drying already in splotches of brown, and still Will laughs, eyes tearing and nose bleeding, teeth red with it and expression entirely broken.

Hannibal watches Mason a moment more, a quiet appreciation for the glassiness in his eyes that so beautifully compliments the pale blue beneath. His face remains livid, with no

movement in his heart to restore it to its pallor, and Hannibal finally turns to Will when the sound of his laughter grows wild through the delicious hum in Hannibal's ears.

His smile widens, outright pride in the boy despite his own need for intercession, and he works his tongue along his teeth, beneath his lips, taking in the blood splattered red and brown across his bare body, the tremor that shakes Will violently.

"You have never been more beautiful than in this moment," Hannibal tells him softly. "Would that I might have you here and now, his body cooling as yours warms again beneath me."

Will makes another weak sound and presses his knuckles between his teeth to stop the giggling that rises uncontrollable as the bile had. He pulls into himself, knees up, shoulders down, a little thing, a tiny broken little bird. He's shaking, the last of the adrenaline leaving him as he watches Hannibal step closer, raises his eyes to the man that now towers over him, expression of the utmost pride and satisfaction.

"Remarkable boy."

The words send Will's entire body into a state of lax but deep arousal, and as soon as Hannibal bends closer, Will snares his arms around him and presses bloody kisses to his lips. Little moans, sobs, clinging wet hands, pulling Hannibal closer, trembling in his hold as he allows himself to be reassured, touched, held, and wanted.

Hannibal presses his hands against Will's back, holds him securely despite how badly he shakes. Savoring the copper tang of blood, the acrid burn of bile, every flavor of the boy that he can take into himself in this moment when Will has erupted beautifully into a creature of wrath and lust the likes of which Hannibal could only imagine. He drives their tongues together, their mouths tangling, sharing his breath with Will and lifting a hand to curl it softly against Will's throat and only reluctantly parting to allow them both to breathe.

He rests their foreheads together for a moment, listening to the little sounds of laughter and sobs that emanate from the boy, relishing the scent of his adrenaline metallic and sharp.

"Put your clothes on," Hannibal instructs him. "Dress quickly and go. You will wait for me in the alley and I will come as if in pursuit and take you from here."

Will nods, shaking and quick, brings his hand up to wipe the blood from his face and finds his wrist snared, stopped. Will doesn't have to lift his eyes to know Hannibal's are filled with pupil, dark and hungry, watching Will so beaten and yet alive, when Mason, behind them, is not. Will swallows, relaxes his fingers and is released to dress.

He manages to do so quickly, pants and boots, unlaced, shirt not tucked in and hair a mess. He is still aching from being fucked, finally feeling pain again now that the numbness of fight or flight has worn off. His face throbs, his nose hurts, and the taste of blood is enough to bring up more bile, though he manages to hold it down.

If I run will you hunt me down?

Words once spoken so softly, so foolishly, to the man before him now; a naive little boy finding his salvation in the arms of a man just as brutal as his master.

I would drag you back screaming if it meant that you would not be away from me. Keep you under lock and key so that he would not discover you. So that no one would know of you but me.

Will swallows, walks past Hannibal without looking back, without touching him, and flings the door open before nearly throwing himself down the stairs.

He is a mess, bleeding and filthy, and one of the little orphans pulls at his sleeve, eyes wide and wet. He asks something, gesturing to Will's nose, the few words Will has slowly picked up from the little things tittering at him add up to the question if Mason hurt him, if he's okay. Will laughs, bites his lip so he can't start hysteria again and shakes his head.

"He's gone," he tells the boy, heavy hand in his hair as the kid closes his eyes and relishes the sweet touch. "He won't hurt you anymore."

He knows the boy doesn't understand, it doesn't matter. Will swallows hard, steps back, and stumbles through the door, looking over his shoulder in panic that is not entirely ingenuine, before running through the streets as fast as his weak legs will carry him.

Hannibal listens to the clatter of wood as the door bangs open, but does not shut again, and knows one of the orphans must be watching - remembering - as Will flees into the snow. A faint smile curves his lips before he smooths it, smooths his waistcoat in turn, checks his pristine white cuffs for blood and finds a trace there, smeared where Will's cheek brushed against it. He lifts it to his nose and breathes it in deeply, humming before he regards Mason.

He looks smaller now, and younger too, his hair a starker white and eyes paler still in contrast to the hideous color of his face. It is a strange thing, to see the man entirely motionless. Stranger still to hear not even the rattle of his breath, let alone his vicious voice screaming for blood, for pain, for pleasure, for beauty, in whatever way his mind imagined it.

But with the cessation of those needs and the quiet of his body, therein is held Hannibal's own history, secrets discovered and held against him in no less suffocating a way than the leash was held against Mason himself.

"Awful boy," Hannibal murmurs to him. His desk is raided for items of import, documents and names and what little money he's stashed into the corners. Cigarettes are taken, a packet of cocaine, and Hannibal draws a breath before flinging the door open hard enough to bang it, and hurtling down the stairs.

"Where did he go?" snaps Hannibal in coarse Turkish. The boy squinting into the driving snow turns to him, eyes wide, and points. Hannibal - for dramatic effect - affects a growl. "Good. Do not go upstairs. Send the barman when he arrives."

The boy nods, and Hannibal snags his coat from beside the door before launching out into the street.

Will runs until he stumbles and can’t anymore, snow seeping through his pants to his knees as he crawls forward and pushes himself into an alley, back to the wall and chest rising and falling with rattling breaths and a hammering heart.

He had not waited in the alley close by, once his legs had started to carry him he kept going, despite the pain above his ankle, despite the fact that his laces had flown loose and wild as he ran, sheer momentum keeping his shoes on his feet. He can feel a thin trickle of blood ooze down against his ankle now, under the heel of his foot.

His hands are filthy from the ground where they rest before he brings them to his hair, to rub the backs of them against his eyes. And for the first time in a long time, Will feels utterly cold, everywhere.

He had killed Mason, he had wrapped a leash around his neck and he had choked him until he almost stopped breathing, and then he had called for aid and *by his word* the man was now dead. Will chokes again, retches but nothing comes up, stomach empty of everything but panic.

He thinks of Hannibal’s pleasure at seeing Will so bloodied, so hurt and so scared, he thinks of how the man had refused to let him clean himself, how he had wanted to see Will run through the streets, a chased and hunted thing, like an animal.

Will sniffs, feels the blood still wet against his lip, at the corners of his mouth where it had seeped and stuck. The smell is oddly reassuring. He is still alive, despite the phantom pressure against his throat, despite the sheer joy Mason had gotten watching Will die before him, the look he had worn thinking Hannibal was about to help *him*, not Will.

Will swallows, licks the blood from his lips and pushes himself to stand, stumbling to the mouth of the alley again to look out, cautious, to see if Hannibal had followed him into the labyrinth of London.

He has. He will. Through the streets with his coat gathered fiercely around him against the cold, though Hannibal hardly feels it with his blood pumping hot through him not only in the thrill of tasting Will's first kill - Hannibal will grant him that - but in the pursuit of his prize to be claimed.

His prey, he thinks with relish, forcing the temptation of a smile down to a stern, cruel narrowness instead.

Hannibal asks, strategically, men standing alongside the street who appear distracted from tormenting passers-by or hawking cheap wares. They describe a boy covered in blood, bruises, 'hardly wearing nothing at all' and through them Hannibal follows Will's route beyond the alley. Beyond the block. He pays - considerably - to a sharp-eyed child who points with a sly finger to the street one over.

Leaving a trail of information for others as much as gathering it himself.

The alleyway darkens, starved for sun anyway, with the size of the form that stands at the end of it. Dressed far too well for this area of London, a terrifying figure made more so by the fact that he is unmolested for doing so, Hannibal looms, backlit in shadow, and lights a cigarette as he regards the huddled boy - a pile of skin and bones and ill-fitted clothes - before him.

"Hello, Will."

Will lifts his eyes, lips lilac from cold and parted as he trembles, arms around his thin form as he kicks his toe over and over against the near-frozen dirt. He says nothing, heart beating quicker for the knowledge that Hannibal had not lied, that he had found him, that had Will kept running, kept hiding, he would have found him then as well.

Will takes a step forward, another, keeps his chin down and his eyes raised, a cub next to the wolf before him, before he steps close enough to be within arm's reach and presses against Hannibal's chest for warmth.

"You did promise," he murmurs, words dragging and shaking with the cold until Hannibal wraps his long coat around them both and Will nearly moans for the feeling.

Hannibal passes his cigarette to the boy who takes it gratefully, as much to warm his lips and fingers as for the the taste of the thing itself. Turning his cheek against Will's hair, he breathes him in, sighing a plume of breath against his ear.

"Shall I take you home, then?"

Will manages a nod, exhaustion choking a sob back in his throat, and Hannibal brushes a kiss across his bruised temple before turning him to exit the alley. There are voices that greet them, taunts and murmurs both, laughter that Will's going to wind up tanned for leather by the great man who does little to dissuade their beliefs. It is not far to his house, situated comfortably on the right side of Bethnal Green, facing the wrong one.

Two blocks before it, though, Hannibal nudges Will with his elbow, a whispered admonition to run, to feign escape again.

The hardest part about it is needing to slow his own steps after Will, rather than simply taking him to the ground.

Skimming the corner of the house, Will waits, breathless, by the back door, shaking from exertion and the bare scrape of adrenaline against his nerves and the cold, the miserable cold that soaks through his clothes and numbs his skin.

He doesn't have to fake the whimper when he's 'caught' once more, bodily dragged around to the front as he feebly fights against the strong arms that carry him. In this part of the city, Will would find no mercy. Those that see too much pay for their truths, those that claim to not see, do as Hannibal is doing, and want nothing more than the destruction of something beautiful.

Within the house, Will is released and he stumbles again, boots near falling off him when he tries to kick them off, and he makes it to the stairs before just clinging to the bannister and shaking. A little laugh erupts from him and Will turns to Hannibal again, eyes wide and wild, face and hands and clothes filthy and just clinging to him.

“I almost killed a man today,” he whispers.

Hannibal’s fingers work free his coat, hung neatly beside the door, and he watches Will at length, at distance, with nothing less than an obscene pride in Will’s words and presence there.

“As good as,” Hannibal agrees with a soft smile, “and next time you will finish it.”

He bends low, nearly a bow that again pulls a laugh from Will, and Hannibal regards the half-mad boy as he unbuttons his spats and steps out of his shoes. They are set aside, unminded for now, and he steps close enough to finally lift the boy from where he has slumped clinging to the stairs and gather Will against him.

“How did it feel?” he asks, the purr of his accent rumbling against Will where their chests press together. He lifts Will in his arms, saving the boy the use of his legs and carrying him up towards the bathroom, the bath, to attend him.

Will’s fingers curl in Hannibal’s shirt as he presses his face against him, smearing blood over the pristine white. He says nothing, but his breathing speeds, a shaky, uneven prelude to panic.

“I hated it,” he whispers, burrowing closer against Hannibal as his steps change from hollow to heavy in the tiled bathroom. “I hated feeling his life leave him, the anger there, the fear… I could feel it, all of it, all of him I could -”

Will feels Hannibal set him down, draw a hand against his face, blood faking to reveal clean skin where Hannibal’s thumb brushes it. His lips curl, a brief and intense pleasure, and Will swallows, thinks of the heat of his gaze as he had allowed Mason to strangle Will that moment longer, before he had granted him aid. Thinks of his words after, of the hunger within him to have Will then and there beside the man he had killed.

Will can feel that same desire radiate from Hannibal now, feels the way his fingers tighten in Will’s hair, hears the word before Hannibal even leans close and whispers, *liar*.

And again he’s shaking, eyes unseeing and seeing two scenes at once, dizziness and nausea, power and control over life and death, the rush he had felt knowing that with one word, Hannibal had done his bidding, *his* and not Mason’s. Will feels his vision tunneling, eyelids flickering as he raises his eyes to Hannibal, allows his chin to follow, proud, as his heart beats quicker and quicker and his hearing echoes.

“It was the best thing I’d ever done,” he breathes, lips tilting in a grin, and with a laugh so soft it’s like a sigh, he lets his eyes roll back and his feet slip from beneath him to fall in a dead faint.

Keeping

Chapter Summary

A twist of Hannibal's hand and Will shivers, a groan pulled from him as his jaw slackens and his eyes close. He licks his lips and leans in to take Hannibal properly, obedient in lifting his eyes, in bending beautifully for how Hannibal wants him.

A kept boy.

An owned boy.

Entirely his own.

Chapter Notes

Gleefully inspired by this NSFW photo set...

For a week, Will does nothing but sleep, exhaustion kneading his body as old aches ease and old cuts knit together. Bruises fade from black to yellow, and although he manages to get some broth into him, Hannibal notices only now how desperately thin the boy has gotten in Mason's care.

He allows Will the recovery, thinking of and reliving the moment that boy had stood with blood on his face and laughed, delighted, childish, happy, before Hannibal had had to catch him from a dead faint. And now, entirely his own, this little thing, naked and sleepy, in need of a bath and beautiful clothes to cover him when Hannibal is not home to remove them, or demand them to be removed so he can look his fill and take his desire. Not that, he supposes, the boy would much mind.

But Will is alone when he wakes, fully, for the first time in days. Alone and with a note by his head, and clean, new clothes set out for him.

"*Dress," it says. "They are for you as you are for me."*

Will takes his time to bathe, heating the water to enjoy it, soaking and sinking to the bottom of the tub in delight until the water begins to cool. He smells like Hannibal, now, his soap and his sheets against him the last however-long, and Will runs his hands over the expensive fabrics before he takes up his shirt to dress.

The first, he notes, is that it is more complicated by far than any shirt he himself has ever worn. There are ties, at the back, like a corset, that bring his slim figure into stark and gorgeous view when he experimentally works them tighter. It delights Will, watching himself in the mirror, as he works the ties tighter still and does as careful a knot as he can manage against his back.

The shirt is all froth at the neck and sleeves, and Will grins, trying to adjust them to keep his fingers free, though they are too long, by far, to do so. He is, perhaps, partially through uncovering the secret to looking somewhat put together in just this new garment, when the door unlocks and he jerks at the sound. Grinning, Will clambers back into the bed, crawls across to kneel by the other clothes he has not yet put on, and waits.

It is a long while before the stairs creak in herald of Hannibal's ascent, hand skimming the well-worn bannister as he makes his way up the steep steps. Though he pulls himself up straight, does not immediately shed his coat and unwind his clothing to relax, the circles beneath his eyes are dark, the only trace of how many hours, days, nights the man has spent in clearing aside Mason's business to assume it for his own.

Will, to all knowledge, has gone missing. A kept boy whose violence was unknown until he tore apart his keeper and fled into the streets of London.

A kept boy now, as well, whose violence Hannibal will remake in his own image instead, and who will not know the freedom of his other persona, that even weeks later is rumored to stalk the streets smothering the life out of any man who touches him.

"You're still in bed," Hannibal remarks, disapproval curling his lips as he lingers long in the doorway, and regards the boy's messy curls. "You've managed a bath, at least. A relief, considering how many days you had gone without."

Will raises his shoulders, buries himself up to his nose in the froth at the collar of his shirt and grins. "I've attempted to dress," he says, straightening again and draping his arms over the sheets before him to illustrate his difficulty. After a moment he crawls closer, enough to sit in the center now, instead of by the pillows, and regards Hannibal with his head tilted, eyes bright. "Did you expect me out of bed?" he remarks, amused. "What am I to do in your house all alone?"

"Anything," Hannibal suggests, but the edge in his tone is dulled by the boy who sprawls himself across the bed, eyes dancing bright blue amusement. "You might have cooked. Cleaned. Read. Done anything more than waste away as if you had the consumption."

Despite himself, Hannibal curls his fingers beneath Will's chin to tilt him upwards, noting with a hum of pleasure that although the boy has managed into the shirt and its bindings, he has not managed into the pants. Soft lips drift across Hannibal's fingers as the boy stretches forward across the bed, feline and lovely, baring his slender legs and the beautiful curve of his backside as the shirt rides up around him.

"Attempted appears to be entirely the correct word," responds Hannibal, withdrawing his fingers from Will's lips to skim them down the curve of his back instead, catching them against every stay bound tightly to him.

“I’ve never had clothes like these before,” Will admits, eyes up, pleased with having drawn such easy distraction by merely stretching his body across the bed. “Never something so fine and complex.”

He feels Hannibal grasp some of the loops to tug them tighter and shifts with the motion, still comfortably on all fours.

“I suppose I am appropriately dressed to be the hired help,” Will jokes, noting the way Hannibal’s eyes darken, at the insult to the clothes he has given Will, and the suggestion both. Will wriggles a little and moves to kneel again, closer, now. His hands drown in the sleeves, covering his fingers entirely and making him appear painfully young, like a boy going through his parents’ clothes and finding them too large.

Hannibal releases the lacing through which he had hooked a finger to instead push a hand back through Will’s hair, grown long in his captivity, left that way now at Hannibal’s insistence. “Ungrateful boy,” he scolds softly. “I have given you a gift, and you compare it to that a maid would wear.” He jerks his hand tighter, thrilling at the gasp his rough grip elicits, the way Will’s lips part beautifully in subservience, in pain, all yielded to Hannibal now, and no other. “Shall I consider you as such? My hired help,” he snarls softly. “You have been performing very poorly if you are that. Enough to merit a sound punishment, for the house to be left in disarray, and you as much.”

Will bites his lip, eyes bright and wide up at Hannibal as he fiddles with the sleeves more, tugging and pulling against the fabric there in nervous anticipation.

“I’m sorry,” he breathes, looking entirely not sorry at all, pleased, beyond words, at how cleverly and quickly he can control with his body. “I don’t know what a kept boy does. Except to be at your beck and call.” The hand in his hair tightens to painful, draws a cry from Will that is followed by a warm little laugh as Will squirms, tries to get his legs under him in a sprawl. “Will you punish me for something I didn’t know?” he asks softly.

“How else is a boy to learn?” Hannibal murmurs in return, eyes hooded and dark, watching the boy twist in his hold but not make a move to struggle away. Will makes another little pleased laughing purr and presses his hands against the mattress.

“Please be kind.”

Hannibal’s hand loosens, enough to stroke Will’s hair from his eyes, tracing down the exquisite curve of his jaw to lift his chin again. Higher, then, raising the boy from his hands back to his knees, watching as slender fingers skim against his bare thighs, riding the length of linen high enough to bare just the tip of his cock, hardening already from the rough treatment and the promise of more.

"As kind as you have been in your appraisal of this gift," Hannibal answers, raising Will with no more than a finger until he can duck low enough to bring their lips together. The kiss is long and curiously soft, a gentle prelude to the strike that follows it and snaps a laugh from Will, startled and scarlet-cheeked. He's hardly time to catch a breath before Hannibal grasps Will's face in his hand, forcing his first two fingers into the boy's mouth, stroking his tongue as Will obediently sucks them, panting hard through his nose.

"Do not question how I punish you," Hannibal warns him, his voice a low rumble, dangerously pleased. "Know that if I do, it is necessary, to ensure that you learn, dreadful boy." Spit trailing glossy against Will's lips, Hannibal pulls his fingers free and brings them to the boy's ass, teasing along his cleft before finding his entrance and pressing into him, steady and relentless. "Your mouth, Will. Use it for more than just complaining."

Will makes a sound, like a moan only pitched higher, a purely innocent little thing from a boy that is anything but. He endures, for a moment, the rough fingering that he has been spared the past week recovering, now new with a sharp stretch again, before bringing up a hand to fumble with the buttons of Hannibal's pants, relenting, at last, to sitting up on his knees to use both hands, gasping when Hannibal pushes in deeper for his trouble.

Beneath the heavy dark fabric, Hannibal is already hard, seeing his boy so disheveled, bright-eyed and skinny, and so little in the shirt he had purchased for him. Will bites his lip, leans in to nuzzle just to the side of Hannibal's cock, brushing his lips dry against the ridge of it, feeling it hot and heavy already.

A twist of Hannibal's hand and Will shivers, a groan pulled from him as his jaw slackens and his eyes close. He licks his lips and leans in to take Hannibal properly, obedient in lifting his eyes, in bending beautifully for how Hannibal wants him.

A kept boy.

An owned boy.

Entirely his own.

An improvement, certainly, from the relentless abuses laid on him by gloved hands that cared less for taking pleasure from the boy than for causing him harm. With Hannibal, the exchange is one of equals - the pain an equal part of their enjoyment as the sordid acts themselves.

But there is still - always - pain. Hannibal hums with a delightful disregard for Will as he splays his fingers inside of him, sending a sharp stab up his spine that parts Will's mouth gasping hot against Hannibal's cock again.

"Deeper," Hannibal tells him, eyes crinkled in amusement. "I know that you are able."

Will's own eyes narrow in response to the challenge, and he parts his spit-slick lips to suck Hannibal deeper into his mouth, past his tongue, until the man's leaking cock brushes the back of Will's throat and yanks a gag tight through his body, squeezing Hannibal's fingers hard inside of him.

"Beautiful," sighs the older man, every whimper, every choking sound pulling his own breath a little shorter. He slides his fingers free of the boy's ass, squeezing the flushed curve of a bare cheek before he runs them higher, again across the corset pulling his already lithe body sleeker still. Hannibal splays his hand over the rich satin, cream-colored and expensive, and hooks a finger beneath one of the laces to jerk it tighter still.

Will makes another choked sound but doesn't struggle away, allows his eyes to close as he's used, mouth punished for his words. He moans, at first soft things, then louder, as Hannibal tightens the laces further, not enough to be cruel but enough to be worn as the shirt should be, and Will feels his ribs press against the fabric now with every choked breath.

When Hannibal laces it fully, the delicate rope is left to hang down the cleft of his ass, enough to gently tap against his balls as Will shifts in gentle motions to take Hannibal as deep as the man wants him to. It is almost delightfully humiliating, half-dressed and in such a fashion, on all fours and forced. Will trembles, digs his hands into the bedspread and tries to draw away enough to breathe easier.

Hannibal holds his cock deep, deep enough that Will chokes for air around it, eyes flying open wide and cheeks red from breathlessness as his struggle intensifies, a thrashing held in place by Hannibal's hand catching the boy's hair, by the corset that restricts him.

"Settle," Hannibal coaxes him, cock filling the boy's mouth, until Will draws two trembling breaths through his nose and Hannibal releases him, watching as Will sprawls back across the bed, legs open and cock throbbing hard against the tight stays wrapped around his belly. There is life, still in his eyes, furious and bright, and Hannibal looks on him fondly for a moment before calmly removing his coat to set it neatly aside. "Spread yourself for me, Will. Use your fingers." Practiced movements work his cufflinks quickly free and fold his sleeves up to his elbows. He unbuttons the topmost part of the stiff, bleached collar that presses beneath his chin.

Will swallows, trembles, brings up a hand to his lips to wipe them dry, watching Hannibal take himself apart from the gentleman put together for the outside world to become this, the thing that comes home to his battered boy to batter him some more. Will bites his lip and shifts to sit more comfortably, knees bent and ankles spread before lying back and tilting his head to see Hannibal better.

His cheeks flush, beautiful and warm, and he brings his hands down to spread his thighs obediently, slip his fingers in gentle motions lower and lower until he is holding himself spread and open as commanded, and waits.

"It suits you," Hannibal tells him, something peculiarly genuine in the words, as he takes in the boy splayed and trembling before him, hopelessly brazen and utterly irresistible. "I feel a sincere appreciation for your half-hearted attempts to dress. Perhaps you will not be allowed the trousers at all."

The down-stuffed mattress shifting unevenly beneath his weight, Hannibal works his own free and kisses the wanton boy who breathes a sweet sound of anticipation against his lips, eyes opening enormously as Hannibal bares himself to the boy in turn, his clothing cast aside and forgotten for now in favor of feeling the beautiful garments - worn by a beautiful boy - against his skin instead.

"My Will," Hannibal purrs in rich French, running a hand back through Will's hair, eyes narrowing in delight as Will grits his teeth in bracing to have it pulled again, but the grip never comes, and instead Hannibal leans in to suck a rough mark against Will's neck.

Will trembles, thighs pressing a little harder to Hannibal's sides though he does not let go from the position he has been told to hold. He is hungry for it, after so long without, hungry for the pressure within him, the heat and coiling desire he feels when this man holds him close or pins him down or strikes him to keep him in line. No better, at all, than Mason, though perhaps more aware of Will's humanity, more willing to allow leniencies and be led by the pretty eyes and coy smile. Will feels passion for the man when he is panting against him, sobbing his pleas and delighting in Hannibal's degrading words. When he is away, Will finds himself bored.

He wonders what that means as he parts his lips now, on a moan, a grin, and lets go of himself to coil his arms over Hannibal's neck.

"It has been far too long," Hannibal intones, heavy cock slipping flushed against Will's belly as Hannibal lays over him, pressed slick against the soft linen, the pale corset, to feel Will's body beneath it, just as luxurious and just as expensive.

With little more than spit to dampen himself, a few quick thrusts to align against the boy's opening, Hannibal closes his eyes and groans low at the tightness of Will around him, widening to take him in. It is a little too fast, still, too sudden and Will's thighs shake sweetly, pulling another pleased purr from Hannibal.

He widens Will, wanting more, now, but in some small way distantly mindful of not wanting to tear him apart as Mason did - a crueler thing, then, to stretch him in relentless inches with hardly more allowance than a breath.

Will takes him with soft gasps and gritted teeth, hands seeking out to grasp the sheets hard, knuckles white from pain as he whimpers and bites it back. He feels Hannibal growl against him louder, part his teeth to press to Will's throat. It hurts and Will's entire body pulses with the ache.

Regardless, he curls his legs over Hannibal's hips when he's fully in, squeezes softly as he looks up with bright wide eyes.

"This isn't a punishment," he breathes, amused and teasing, gasping when Hannibal shifts and draws a mewl from Will. "This is what I ache for when I ache for you."

It is compliment and taunt all at once, cruel and coy, and Hannibal digs his fingers against Will's throat in answer, burying himself to the hilt and holding the squirming boy still as Will gasps.

"I wished to see you beautiful, to enjoy your company, but you are far too clever to allow that, aren't you?" He draws his nose along Will's cheek, releasing him long enough to breathe only when Will grasps at his arm, nails curling into his skin, and then snares him again just as quickly. "All day, Will, all day I have pursued you in the streets, all day I have made excuses for your whereabouts - the devious boy who outwitted Mason Verger and Hannibal Lecter. And now you wish me to punish you? In truth, boy, I am not sure that if I began I would be able to stop."

He spreads Will's lips with his own, tongues curling together around savage sounds, hardly human, hips digging bruises into the boy's bare legs left too long unmarked.

Will shivers, draws nails down Hannibal's arms when breathing becomes near impossible with the pressure against his throat and the lips that steal any air he would otherwise manage to draw in.

He scratches him hard enough to draw blood and Hannibal pulls back, releasing Will to breathe as he keeps pounding into him.

"Do you know that the orphans think you a hero?" Hannibal growls, pushing against Will as the boy coughs and writhes beneath him. "You have killed him and run from me. Do you know how many have run from me?" Will gasps, twists, whimpers and bites his lip when Hannibal catches both his hands and presses them to the bed behind him in a cruel grip. "Four. And I brought them all back. And you, to them, are the one that got away and stayed away."

He pushes in deep and leans over Will to catch his eye, to watch him properly as the boy fights the pain and pleasure coursing through him. "On the streets I am a laughing stock. The man who let a scrawny little thing outsmart him. But little do they know that I get to come home to you, wrapped up so prettily for me and showing me everything that shirt doesn't cover, you beautiful boy. Little do they know how entirely I own you."

Will shivers, toes curling and head turning to seek the safety of no eye contact. Despite that, he kisses Hannibal deep when the man works his lips open again, blushing with pleasure and humiliation both. "Good," he moans, lip between his teeth again as Hannibal pulls out of him only to push back in. "Let them think I've run. Let them watch you chase."

The slap across Will's mouth rings in the bedroom nearly as long as the moan it elicits before Hannibal crushes that too from the boy's beautiful grinning lips.

"And you," Hannibal growls, lips curled back in pleasure as he violates this boy - his boy, now, and no one else's. "I will let them think you clever. Let them think you as a champion. They know not how you spread yourself for me, how you crawl and coil and beg and sob for me when I have been too far away."

Hair caught in Hannibal's grip, his weight heavy over the lovely little creature that only spreads his legs wider in response, Hannibal sucks marks against his neck, rattling the bed beneath the force of his thrusts. "But do not think yourself so clever, beautiful boy. You are skilled. Extraordinary. And yet here you are, and by my hand alone." He loosens Will's wrists to work his hand between their bodies, and grasp Will's cock for strokes as rough as his own inside of him. "Were it not for me you would still be there, broken-legged, toothless, battered or dead in the Thames."

He knows it's true, knows that were Mason left to his own devices Will would have starved within the first week, would have died of dehydration… but Hannibal had found him instead, had tormented him with pleasure, threatened him with Mason's ire, but fed him, watered him, clothed and shoed him. Kept most of Mason's anger directed aside as he took Will for himself, claimed and took and demanded.

“Hannibal -” he moans, shivering in his grasp. “Hannibal let me -”

“No.” Hannibal bites against Will again, holds there as the boy writhes and pants beneath him. “Awful boy, this is punishment.”

Will sobs, twists his hands to curl against Hannibal, down his back, into his hair, everywhere and all at once. He’s so close, entire body trembling, sore, hot and sensitive. He bites his lip and whines, leaking against Hannibal’s hand, brutal and fast against him.

“I can’t - I’m going to -”

“You will,” Hannibal tells him, watching with heavy-lidded eyes as the boy’s expression contorts in pain and pleasure both. “Do not until I tell you. You will be lucky if I let you at all.” The sob that aches from Will's lips is enough to push Hannibal over with a groan, fingers cinching tight around Will’s cock, filling him again and again with every erratic thrust. It is only when he slows, heart pounding, that he leans back on his knees, dragging the boy with him - still inside of him, and releases his grip just enough.

“Now, Will. Let me see it.”

Will clings, small hands over Hannibal’s shoulders even as the man clicks his tongue and brings one hand up to raise Will’s chin to watch him come apart, red-cheeked and wet-lipped, mouth open in the most sweet pleasure, brows drawn in something like pain as his body finally allows him release against Hannibal’s rough hand. It rips through him, curls Will’s shoulders and bends his back, thighs spread wide as the cord from the corset beats softly against his ass in reminder, perhaps in anticipation of his actual punishment for giving lip. Will can’t bring himself to care, he can barely keep his eyes open with the euphoria that spreads through him. He laughs, bites his lip, and turns his face into the hand that holds him in a nuzzle that is far too affectionate for this situation.

Even Hannibal softens, a little, at the sweetness that comes over the boy when he’s like this. Youthful and genuine in the pleasure his body gives him, in surviving the pain that so many seem compelled to lay into his skin, and Hannibal cannot bring himself to lash the boy as he had initially intended, with the cane left outside the door. Instead he lowers himself, hands framing the whalebone corset that brings Will’s body so beautifully narrow, and with something like reverence - like obsession - Hannibal draws his tongue across the mess of Will’s release, soaking into the satin.

For a moment, he envisions that the salty taste is blood instead, and remembering the boy so bathed in it earns an approving rumble from the older man.

He sinks his arms around Will, then, sliding to his back and dragging the boy on top of him, to run his hands with appreciation over the exquisite clothing, however unappreciated Hannibal assumes it to be, laying soft against the skin of his Will. The boy arches, settles comfortably splayed over his master and sighs as Hannibal runs his hands down over the fabric, fingers catching in the loops of tightened cord, before slipping to his ass and squeezing gently.

“Will I be permitted to wear the pants you’ve bought me?” he asks, amused, pushing his bottom back into the large hands holding him.

“I rather prefer you like this,” Hannibal answers, fingers curling in appreciation, and to bring Will closer to him with a tug. He nuzzles against the side of the boy’s nose, brushes a kiss across still-swollen lips, and smiles faintly. “Perhaps you will earn them.”

Reckoning

Chapter Summary

“I went out the back door, came back the same way.”

“I locked the back door.”

Will makes a sound, a hum perhaps, but his expression is one of almost pitying adoration, that Hannibal would think locks were enough.

Chapter Notes

And so... the end.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

“Hannibal, please.”

Just a slow smile in response, a narrowing of the eyes that Will knows means something bad if he disobeys. Physically, he does not hate it, his body is arched and bent beautifully, flushed and shivering, cock hard and curved up to his stomach, leaving sticky little points where the tip touches skin. He is the wanton little creature that had grinned up at Hannibal from the floor by Mason’s feet, at breakfast, and spoke to him in French. He is the ultimate vice of two sadists, two monsters.

And he can’t believe they’ve both made him do this.

How or where Hannibal even found it is beyond him, but one morning the loathed thing was on the bedside table and Will stared at it, glared, until Hannibal had kissed him pliant, fondled him until he was nearly in tears begging for release and told him the terms of their game. The price of the soft sheets and many books, of good food and rest when Hannibal is not home to exhaust his boy further.

If he thinks about it, really, Will doesn’t hate it. But he had thought Hannibal *more* than this.

With a whine, lips parted and cheeks flushed, Will raises his hips higher and shifts them side to side, the tail following, plug pushing hard against his prostate, enough to draw a shivering laugh from Will, to draw more begging and sweet sounds. He claws his hands in the sheets when Hannibal’s hands slip down to stroke just around it, setting Will to trembling.

“Please,” he whines again, eyes up and lip between his teeth, obedient. "I’ve worn it all day, I need you…”

Hannibal hums, kissing the sensitive skin, lips brushing against the wooden base of the tail, allowing himself a genuine smile when Will’s voice turns to whimpers.

He had found the thing on the ground outside the den, presumably pitched from the upstairs window when Mason left Will alone, and rolled it quietly into a coat pocket for safe-keeping. It is a beautifully crafted thing, made more so when used for its purpose of torment that turns Will’s face a particularly striking shade of scarlet. Though he has little interest in actually treating the boy like a dog, Hannibal gives credit to Mason in his sense of whimsy, at least, for briefly refining his perversity to such a lovely result.

“How was it for you, to feel it all day, pressing - stretching?” Hannibal asks, and Will merely sobs a sound of agonized pleasure against the sheets in response. Temptation, bared, Will stretches his arms far out in front of him, hips turning higher, and he gives just enough of a shake to send the tail brushing against his thighs.

"Too much," Will replies at length, breathless, needy. He wants it out, he wants to feel Hannibal there instead, wants to turn to him after and burrow against his chest and just rest, as his body comes down from the high of being turned on all day.

"You've done admirably," Hannibal offers, and Will can hear the smile, "for your claim of 'too much'. Shall we see if we can find 'too much'?"

Will sobs again, thighs trembling and body bent, shaking his head that turns more into a nuzzle into the covers. He tenses, Hannibal's hand over his thighs in slow strokes, prepared for a strike or a harsh spanking simply because Hannibal wants to inflict one, but it seems enough, for the man, to know that the threat of it sends Will to this.

"Please," Will tries again, sliding one knee wider. "I need to feel you instead. I've been good, I didn't try to take it out, I didn't -"

“I know,” Hannibal tells him, soothing words to preface the kisses that he traces along the boy’s rosy backside, spread wider with his hands and then squeezed gently again. “I know you’ve been good today.”

He traces downward, gathering the soft fur in his fingers and curling it between Will’s legs to tickle Will’s cock, an electric snap up the boy’s spine that sends him groaning, but still not nearly enough friction. Again and again Hannibal teases him this way, savoring the pleas and promises, reassuring him that he has done just as Hannibal asked.

Broad hands skim upwards over Will’s ribs, around to his chest, back across his shoulders until Hannibal is curled over him now, his own hardness pressing the plug just a little further, shifting it within Will whenever Hannibal moves. He grasps the boy’s chin in his hands and lifts his head upward, rocking his hips against him with a rumble of approval when Will’s back bends exquisitely beneath him.

“Can you last a little longer?” Hannibal asks, perhaps teasing, perhaps not. “Through dinner, Will, can you withstand a little more?”

Will shakes his head, sobs thickly against the cool air, but says nothing. He has no choice regardless, and he knows that the dull ache of need already spread to the hot fire all over him will only get worse as they get through dinner. He knows, too, that the praise after will be incredible, he will be worshipped for the endurance, for being so good and for so long, for being a remarkable boy.

That, at least, has not changed.

He is still Hannibal's remarkable boy.

But as he’s finally granted mercy, collapsing, sweaty, on Hannibal where he'd ridden him until his voice broke and his mind swayed, Will knows, too, that he has become *Hannibal’s*, entirely the man’s to control and command and keep. He wonders why, nuzzling up against the warm hair on Hannibal's chest, he does not feel like he had when Hannibal had brought him home that night, why he no longer feels like a creature adored but a thing won.

Maybe the backdrop of Mason was enough to pick out the light parts of Hannibal Lecter, but with it gone, the man is no more saint than the boy they had both killed. Will bites, hard, just to feel the tension coil in Hannibal, to feel him flip Will to his back with a murmured reprimand and a smile. Some days just feel better than others, he supposes.

When Hannibal leaves him for the day the next morning, Will stokes the fire and watches the delicate fur coil hair by hair within it. He makes sure the plug is fully burned up before attempting breakfast.

Hannibal’s work is one of maintenance now, assuming the seat of his former partner figuratively and literally. The vices extraneous to those that form the foundation of the business are eradicated, the boys kept for their skill in work but unharmed now, and Mason’s room purged of any trace of him that once was there. He is not to be mentioned, the workers know, and in truth they have little reason to, all grateful to see him gone, but none as much as Hannibal.

In one crushing blow, Hannibal has managed what he’s spent years delaying - from disinterest, from inconvenience, for myriad reasons, really, not the least of which being the truths of him that Mason held above his head. Those secrets disposed of with the wretched boy himself, Hannibal settles into the desk with a long unfurling pleasure, one monster assuming the territory of the other.

His business only, now. His secrets only, now.

And more particularly, his boy only, now. The sweetest reward of all, in knowing that he prevented Will’s death long enough that Mason’s declarations of ownership could be voided, and Will his to possess entirely. Will was informed, as soon as he first awoke in Hannibal’s house after fleeing the den, that he is not to leave. Not with Hannibal, and especially not without. Warned that the streets themselves would rise up to hunt him - dangerous men to

whom Mason owed debts, those who were loyal to the self-made boy-king, and all manner of blackmailers would surely be searching for Will in light of his actions.

It was an easy enough lie, and it contents Hannibal immensely to know that the boy is waiting for him at the end of the day. He is treated kindly enough, given books and food, allowed free reign of the house itself, and Hannibal imagines it a satisfactory change from being held captive by Mason.

And so when he returns one day from the den and finds a trace of water beneath Will's boots, Hannibal's displeasure is dizzying.

Will, for his part, merely flicks his eyes up from the book resting heavy in his lap, before returning them to it.

"The weather was kind and I was careful," he says, pulling his legs closer to his chest as he tries to lose himself in the book again. He has read most, now, within the house, some in languages he did not speak merely to see the words run over and over before his eyes, slowly making sense of one word or another for his own personal enjoyment.

"I went out the back door, came back the same way."

"I locked the back door."

Will makes a sound, a hum perhaps, but his expression is one of almost pitying adoration, that Hannibal would think locks were enough.

Hannibal's jaw tightens, once, and releases as he shoulders out of his coat. "How is your reading?"

"Trite," Will replies earnestly. "I've never understood the appeal of Austen."

Humming a passive agreement, Hannibal ducks to unbutton his spats from around his calves and unlace his boots, bringing the soft leather to sit in front of the fire. "Did you eat today?"

"Breakfast," answers Will, but he feels a cold prickle up the back of his neck and attempts to shake it loose, tossing his hair before dropping the book aside and tucking his legs underneath him. He settles onto his knees, hands folded between them, and watches as Hannibal folds up the sleeves of his shirt. "I had some of the bacon. Bread and butter." A pause, as he chews his lip. "A pie, when I went out."

Hannibal nods, and releases a long breath, turning towards Will and stepping nearer the boy. "I ask from curiosity," he intones softly. "A desire to know what I have done that would make you so flagrantly disobey me." He presses his fingers beneath Will's chin, to tilt his head upwards. "You are fed then. Clothed. Kept warm and safe. I have bought you books. Brought you canvases and paints. Anything that you would require."

Another flicker of tension down his neck, that Hannibal stretches slowly. "Why, Will?"

Will watches him carefully, eyes moving between Hannibal's own before he blinks. Swallows.

“I am not a pet,” he tells him softly. “I am not a thing that you can lock up in a nice house with nice things and expect to stay there. I need to explore, Hannibal, I need to see London, I need to find new foods, new books, new people on my own.”

He feels the tightening of Hannibal’s fingers and stops speaking for a moment, taking a breath to ease the tension from his own shoulders, hopes it eases Hannibal’s as well.

“Why do you keep me under lock and key?” he asks in return.

His words burn beneath Hannibal’s skin, a slow-building sensation like embers, simmering heat that Hannibal allows but does not yet let himself react to. He considers the question, as it is asked, rather than as the mewling he hears it as.

“For your safety,” Hannibal answers, and Will huffs a soft laugh.

“I can fend for myself, Hannibal, I was careful. I will be careful.”

“You will not need to be,” the older man informs him, fingers twitching tighter against Will’s jaw. “You are mine, Will. As you said you were. As you agreed you would be. Were you lying, then, when you made those promises to me?”

Again, Will just swallows, just watches as a similar, familiar madness finds his words ground to nothing. He wonders if he is really such a precious thing to own, or if merely the idea of being able to is enough.

“I am yours,” he agrees, gentle, shifting to sit straighter, to sit closer. One hand gently picks at a nail in a repetitive and quiet way, grounding, perhaps. “I will be. But can I not be yours and be allowed to express it? Let me go out with you, then, if not alone?”

He pouts, just enough to push his bottom lip forward and blinks. “I miss you when you go away,” Will says, and it’s not a lie. “Let me go to the den with you, or to meetings. I can learn another language -”

“You ask for foolish things,” Hannibal responds, not ungently, smoothing his palm across Will’s cheek, back into his hair to stroke through his curls. “How would it appear if the boy who killed Mason appeared alongside me? How would that be seen by those who were loyal to him?”

“Who was?” Will asks, gasping as Hannibal’s fingers tighten in warning. “There wasn’t a soul there who didn’t hate him, Hannibal - who isn’t glad that he’s gone. They would *thank me* for it -”

Hannibal jerks Will hard to the side, sending him sprawling across the couch. He looms low over him, takes in the scent of the city - smog and filth - still clinging to him. “But rather than ask me if I might take you somewhere, to meet all the new people who interest you so keenly, you simply leave after I have forbidden it. Why then should I trust you now to behave with anything less than insolence?”

Will bites his lip but stays where he's been pushed, eyes narrowed in anger, in disbelief. For a moment both are still, both quiet, Hannibal seething in his lack of control, Will in his own. A standoff between two dangerous things, each in their own way before Will's expression clears and he turns his head to nuzzle against the hand holding him.

With Hannibal, to pacify is to submit. So Will does.

"I'm sorry," he says gently, brows pressing together as Hannibal pulls his hair a little harder for the words. "I should have asked, I should've…" He swallows, lifts his eyes to Hannibal, the needy, soft look he had so often given Mason to redirect his mind from violence to something more carnal.

"Can I earn it?" he asks. "The trust to go out on my own and come back? What would you have me do?"

"The truth of it then," Hannibal considers. "That you do not wish to accompany me. That, perhaps, you do not in fact miss me at all." He lets Will nuzzle against him again, watching the boy with an implacable gaze. "What is there out there for you that I could not provide for you, I wonder."

Will's eyes widen, just enough to seem more innocent, softer, younger. He can feel the thread of conversation slipping from his fingers to something more dire. This will go in circles, until Hannibal's anger pulls free or Will's desire to stand against his claims fails. Endless cycles. Loops of loops.

So Will arches up, brings his lips warm to the stubbled jaw of the man above him, closes his eyes with a sigh and kisses him again.

"Show me everything then," he says, shifting backwards so Hannibal follows, so they are both pressed to the couch together, so Will can gently bite against his earlobe and shiver when Hannibal growls at him. "So I know not to go looking for anything else."

Hannibal knows well this move, the boy transparent in his manipulation, a change of strategy but not in the game itself. He lets Will tend to him, lithe body arching up against his own as he lays heavy over his boy, lets Will kiss and coax him with little hands and warm lips. Tracing the backs of his fingers down Will's cheek, he turns the boy's head aside to kiss down his soft skin, wonderfully pale, free now of any marks but those that Hannibal has left on him.

He wonders for a moment if perhaps Mason's limited cleverness didn't go a step further past the tail, and considers the benefits of a leash for his little runaway.

"You are less correct in your assumption that no one will care, were you to appear at the den with me," Hannibal murmurs. "The greater summation is that I do not care that they might care. It is mine now, the business. The opium. The profits. And you."

He turns Will's face towards his own again, pleased as ever by the willingness the boy shows in being moved by Hannibal's touch, whether harsh or gentle.

“I will bring you with me when I am able,” Hannibal tells him. “Take you into the city to sate your wanderlust. In trade, you will let me ensure that you do not leave without me. Do you agree?”

Will feels the familiar prickle of caution, warning, instinct against his skin, behind his head, down his spine. The words snare there, they’re not a trade, they are a conclusion with heavy warning within. Will parts his lips, lets his eyes grow more hooded, almost sleepy as he wraps his arms over Hannibal’s shoulders and holds him that way.

“I will not leave without you,” he says, sweet as he can manage, and finds only hard eyes in answer; it was not the question asked. He licks his lips with a sigh and nods, drawing his knees up around Hannibal, as they lie. “I agree.”

There is no right answer to these questions, but they suffice to merely determine whether or not Hannibal’s demands are met by force or coercion. He gentles, rumbling pleased against Will’s throat at the response, and as Will curls his arms around Hannibal’s neck, he knows that he’s answered as best as he can when in truth it hardly makes a difference.

The next day, Will finds himself bound to the bed, leashed and locked in place with a leather belt. He spits and hisses and it does nothing to shake the calm demeanor of the man who keeps him there, but for the scratch along Hannibal’s arm that earns Will a vicious slap for his trouble. “You are doing little to earn your outing,” Hannibal informs him as he steps away to gather his things. “Perhaps if you can manage not to destroy anything while I am out this morning, I will take you out later.”

A pause, and a smile that Will once found charming finds its way to Hannibal’s lips. “Perhaps.”

Wil watches him go, livid, bewildered, and somewhere, deeper, where he refuses to admit it’s even there, genuinely intensely sad. He spends most of his morning struggling, a continuous twist of his wrist one way or the other, over and over, to work it free. All he gets is raw skin and the dampness of tears on his face from frustration.

He watches the ceiling, as the shadows play across it as the day wears on, and wonders what happened, when, and how, to bring something that had felt so good to this. He almost doesn’t hear Hannibal come home, follows him with his eyes as he returns to the bed to regard the boy against it. Will watches him, the same man he had seen that morning from the floor of the back room, the same man who had tormented him the first time he had Will tethered and alone, the same man who had taken him from the den and treated him so softly for one night as Will admitted his desire to kill and to get free.

Carefully, he splays his fingers towards Hannibal, seeking, needing, and making a gentle sound when Hannibal brushes his fingers, his lips over Will’s forehead, and leaves him tethered still as he undresses.

“You will help me with dinner,” Hannibal tells him, and his tone is back to the neutral assumption that everything he says will be agreed with, taken without question. Will supposes he played into that ego long enough for the thought to stick. “And then I will have you until you speak in tongues, beautiful boy - the day has been wretched.”

For us both is left unsaid, and Will finds himself smiling, if a little, at the implication.

When his pride - his need for possession - is sated, Hannibal is still kind, and he appears genuinely pleased to come to the boy now and loosen his bindings, careful fingers stroking across the damage that Will did to himself in struggling. He brings Will's wrist to his lips and kisses it, tongue tracing the metallic taste of raw skin, following the length of his slender arm upward with his mouth, until they kiss. A deep thing, tongues and lips tangled together, and Hannibal smooths Will's hair back from his face affectionately before stepping back to allow him to stretch and move.

He does allow him freedom of the house again, when he is there, but for weeks the binding is strapped to him again when Hannibal leaves. Will stops fighting it, realizing it will do no good, and when the chafing has been left alone long enough to heal, only then does Hannibal allow the boy outside with him.

An earnest pleasure is felt when Will follows after him to the market, the sweet sound of his laughter - his relief - resonating deeply through Hannibal as Will squints against the sun, turns his face to the cold wind that blows across it. Edification, for Hannibal, that by restricting Will from being allowed certain things, it heightens his enjoyment of them. Evidence, for Hannibal, that what he's done was both necessary and right.

He allows Will to explore at leisure, a show of trust despite it eating at Hannibal in the worst way. He finds, though, that the boy does not run fast out of sight but lingers where the booksellers have set up, watches as Will takes up tome after tome to see the cover, to open it and touch the pages. He does not have money of his own, though, Hannibal supposes, ironically amused - perhaps he should, for his part.

He himself buys food, fresh vegetables and fruits, warm bread. He allows, when he approaches Will, still immersed in shuffling through all the books available, him two of his choice and watches as Will's fingers splay and he pushes up on tiptoes to bend to reach the very back of the table.

He is beautifully dressed, now, in the things Hannibal has bought him, hair pulled into a tail at the base of his neck, tiny, still, and curled at the end in the most endearing way. He selects his books, pulls them to his chest as Hannibal pays, and accepts the bread to carry as well as they return to the house.

Will's cheeks are flushed from the wind, from the pleasure of being outside, and when they have set their things down Will pulls himself into Hannibal's arms and kisses him. He's lifted from his feet, snared so easily in Hannibal's arms and hoisted onto the counter, kiss unbroken as Hannibal slides his hands down Will's thighs, leaning up to him now, a smile curling his lips.

"Good things come to those who wait," Hannibal murmurs, touching a kiss against Will's cheek, his jaw, his throat and lingering here to taste Will's fluttering pulse beneath his tongue. "Beautiful boy."

Only reluctantly does Hannibal part from him, allowing Will to page through one of his books, ankles crossed and lip held between his teeth. He is - truly - lovely, worthy of being

kept even for the inconveniences captivity occasionally presents from such a wild and bright little thing as he. Hannibal finds his attention drawn to Will, who remains obediently where he was placed, again and again as he works, cutting up the fresh vegetables from the fine market to which they had to walk to find more than wilted greens and half-rotted potatoes.

A stew, perhaps, rich with spices and heat to warm the damp London chill from their bones, and Hannibal steps out back to the icebox to select a particular piece of meat that he's been saving for just such an occasion. A celebration, then, for the accord they seem to have struck.

Will looks up when he is called, setting the book aside and sliding his feet to the floor to move to stand beside Hannibal as the man unwraps what he has brought back. Will's watched Hannibal cook before, on occasion been asked to help. But beyond cutting vegetables his skills have not improved and he has not cared to try and make them.

"You will prepare this," Hannibal tells him, and Will frowns, eyes up. It is a large cut of meat, clean - unlike a lot that is presented in the street - and healthy. At least, it had been before it was culled for food. It is rare to see something like this, even at the market they had visited, and Will feels that same prickle of warning against his skin.

"I don't know how," he admits.

"Then you will learn," agrees Hannibal, pleased with the notion enough that it overrides the flicker of irritation at the boy's mild resistance. He reaches for the broad knife beside them and presses it to Will's palm, an act of trust in itself, and steps behind the boy to wrap his hands over Will's much smaller ones.

"Simple strokes. The meat - though cold - is not frozen solid and so you do not have to struggle against it." Hannibal's smile widens, briefly, before he continues. "Just so, a rocking motion to sever and let the meat fall away. Strips first, and then the other direction, into perfect cubes." He guides Will through the motion several times, sweeps the readied portions aside, and then allows Will to move on his own.

"Just so," Hannibal murmurs, turning his nose against Will's temple and following the nuzzle with a kiss, tender. "One should always know how to prepare the meat that they have provided."

Will pauses, cold fingers against cold meat, and endures the kiss with a held breath. He has learned that with Hannibal there are two kinds of praise, one given lightly, sweet things that mean little but cost nothing. And praise like this, praise earned without explicitly trying. He shivers, hopes Hannibal sees it as a response to the gentleness, the words.

"You're my provider," he tells him softly, turning into the gesture and feeling Hannibal laugh more than hearing him, a pleased, deep murmur within his chest that sends Will's blood cold. He tries to set the knife down and finds his wrist gently snared, his hand returned to the work as before.

"I just enjoy what you bring me," Will adds.

The flattery, as ever, is appreciated and Hannibal slips his arms around Will's waist, splaying a hand across his belly that nearly covers it entirely. He ducks his head to tuck against his boy's neck, kissing softly, careful not to grow too ardent and risk distracting Will from his work. His first time, and one of many, Hannibal hopes, warming at the thought of it.

"Take pride in your own work, too," Hannibal responds, sweeping a stray curl of hair behind Will's ear to nuzzle fondly here as well. "It was you that did the most of it, who suffered the blows in stride, beautiful and snarling," he sighs. "Teeth bared with blood. I have never seen anything so striking."

Hannibal soothes away the tightness he feels snap across Will's stomach, adding with pleasure, "This is yours, and I will not take credit for it. And so it is only right that you will prepare him."

Will wonders why his first response is to set the knife down, not turn it back against the man behind him, the man so sweetly discussing the eradication and now consumption of another human being. He goes still, entirely, terrifyingly still, and although he knows Hannibal is touching him, Will cannot feel it.

He thinks of Mason, not the way he is here, not how he had seen him last, beneath him and nearly blue in the face, above him and red with the anger of it. He thinks of Mason laughing, tilting his head and explaining how he learned his evil from Hannibal. How Hannibal is a man to be feared in his own right, how he is dangerous. He had always purred that word. Dangerous.

Will had never paid him mind, never cared.

Mason's evil had been enough for him, he didn't need it in his salvation.

Will slowly shakes his head, knows the sound he hears is his own and jerks back, only to find himself snared against Hannibal, just hard enough to be warning, not yet hard enough to be restraining.

"Why?"

It's a question that Hannibal has never had to answer before, in truth. To allow Mason to know had been a rare misjudgment on Hannibal's part, an attempt to level the playing field between them when early in their relationship, Hannibal had thought him not only sane but competent. A trade of information, veiled in a threat of what Hannibal might do were Mason to betray their partnership, each held far too long over the other's head until neither were able to extricate themselves. As Mason's sanity slipped and his proclivities grew, the currency of information that Hannibal had over him mattered less and less, and with the death of the senior Verger, it became entirely worthless.

An oversight that became an inconvenience, now remedied. But even Mason had never asked him this.

"One should not waste," Hannibal replies simply. "Beneath the skin we are all much the same - cow and chicken, hog and human." He hushes Will softly when the boy's breath hitches,

smoothing his hair back from his face and loosening his grip only to return his hands to Will's own, returning them despite the tense resistance to his work.

"It is something I have shared with no one, who did not die for the knowledge of it," Hannibal considers, humming in thought before he rests his cheek against Will's own, and watches another slice of meat fall from the rest. "Since you excelled so beautifully in ensnaring him, I can only imagine of how much more you are capable."

"I don't want to," Will says, pushing back, finding himself pressed back firmly against the counter, hands still held over the meat - the man, what was once a man - before him. He turns his head away from the touches, from the kisses that follow, eyes closed tight as he tries to wriggle free, finding Hannibal, always strong, always holding him still.

"This is wrong, Hannibal, it's so wrong." He makes another soft sound, splays his fingers over the knife handle, trying to let it go, and cries out softly when Hannibal's hand still presses his palm hard against it, using his hand even when Will is not holding the knife anymore.

"Was he not cruel to you?" Hannibal purrs against him, and Will feels himself trembling. "Was he not monstrous?"

"This is monstrous," Will breathes, finds a reprimanding hum against him, in warning that next time he misspeaks he will feel it instead. Will swallows, shakes his head. "Let me go."

Hannibal ignores the request, turning the boy to face him instead. He removes the knife from Will's hand and sends it down the counter, out of reach, and braces one hand against the counter to hold him in place, the other stroking against his cheek, now pale. "You did not mind before, when I cooked for you - kept you sated, kept you full, rather than starve you as he did. You did not mind the thought of killing him, because he was less than a person to you. And so why then mind this?"

Will tries to duck away from him but is held, by hard hands, and shoved firmly back to the counter. To his credit, Hannibal's voice does not turn cruel - he is not without sympathy for the boy in facing something unknown and strange to him - but neither does he relent in what he insists for Will to do.

"Think of the things that he did to you, Will. How he made you starve and thirst, bleed and ache. Think of the things that he did to others, smaller and weaker than even yourself, and to much worse ends than what you suffered beneath him. And tell me that he is worth regard as anything more than what lies upon the cutting board now."

Will's eyes seek between Hannibal's over and over, and he feels his stomach twist in frightening realization, in horror, and he retches before he can stop himself. Hannibal's hand comes up to press against his mouth, hold him that way, fingers hard against his cheeks.

"Compose yourself," he tells him, expression almost exhausted as Will continues to resist him, resist this. Will makes a weak sound, sick and in pain and helpless and closes his eyes again. He does not want to compose himself, he does not know if he can. He has seen Mason's monstrosities, he has experienced them, he has woken on the wooden floor in a

puddle of his own blood wondering how he is still alive and he has seen the little ones scatter from Mason like he were the devil himself.

And even still he cannot bring himself to think that what is happening now is in any way right, in any way better than what Mason did. He jerks, just once, opens his eyes and does not spit or bite when Hannibal carefully removes his hand to allow him to speak again.

“You are just like him, this is no better than what he did,” Will whispers, and still he is imploring, begging for Hannibal to see that, he is not spiteful, he is not righteous. “Hannibal, I can’t do this, I don’t want to. Please -”

The slap is hard enough to ring through the kitchen, hard enough to force color back to Will’s cheek where Hannibal’s hand crosses it, and Hannibal holds him by his throat, fingers placed just against the staccato pulse now hammering through Will’s body.

“Someday you will learn to think before you speak,” snarls Hannibal softly. “Before you compare this to what he has done to so many. You did not hear them sob, begging for their mothers who would never come for them, the silence far worse that fell over the den when he was done. You know nothing of what you speak, ungrateful child, and you make me wonder if I should not have simply left you to him to suffer their same fate.”

He steps back, almost unsteady with anger that has built from simmering to a rolling boil within his blood, bringing his fingers to his lips in an attempt to stop himself from acting on his own words right here and now. He meets Will’s eyes, wide and shining, his own thunderously dark, and murmurs, “Go to your room, Will, and wait. I will finish preparing this without you, and you will join me for dinner when it is done. You are lucky not to join him in it.”

Will shakes his head, finds that Hannibal’s eyes snap to the movement immediately and he stumbles to the stairs before he angers the man further. He has his knees pulled up to his chest, arms around himself and shaking in bed by the time he realizes that he should have run, instead. The door had been there, right there, and he had turned for the stairs instead, sought his safety in the warm bed he had woken from all his torments in.

He directs his eyes to the door, quietly closed though he had wanted to slam it, listens to the sounds downstairs, of Hannibal moving around, chopping more vegetables, finishing the meat, seasoning the stew, leaving it to cook as he slices the bread for their dinner.

Will can still smell the meat against his fingers where he had not had a chance to wash his hands, and in a moment of panic draws them over his clothes, over and over until his palms are red and his shirt messy, untucked where he had pulled at it trying to wipe the smell and feeling of cold and dead away.

He presses himself to the headboard, hands down to grip the sheets when the door opens, when Hannibal leans against the doorframe and regards Will with the same cool disappointment he had leveled on the boy downstairs, before Will had drawn his fury. Part of Will almost wants to apologize, to slip to his knees and wrap his arms around Hannibal’s legs and beg him to forgive him.

Almost.

And just a part.

Will swallows and shakes his head. “Thank you, I’m not hungry,” he whispers.

There are rarely right answers beyond the one Hannibal wishes to hear, merely determinants of whether his desires are met by force or by coercion.

In this case, Will has responded in favor of force, and Hannibal’s eyes narrow.

“I did not ask,” Hannibal informs him quietly. “And it is nothing you have not done already, many times before.”

“I didn’t know,” Will tells him, brows drawn, stomach turning again and hands grasping harder against the sheets for a moment, little body trembling. He knows this will not end in his favor no matter what he does, or how hard he tries. Again, he gently shakes his head. “I don’t want to.”

“But you will,” responds Hannibal, “because I wish for it.”

He watches as a silent sob shakes Will’s body, so small where he sits coiled, drawn as far back against the headboard as he could possibly be, and it hurts, Hannibal realizes, to see him so. He thinks of the basement, how much Will feared him then, and how he never wished to be the cause of such terror in the boy again.

He wonders if it was ever truly avoidable.

“Come,” Hannibal murmurs, leaving little room for argument. “I do not wish to force you.”

It nearly comes to that, as Will’s answers turn to begging, as his last remaining steadiness gives way to pleas and little sobs. Hannibal is forced to step towards him before Will finally pulls himself numb from the bed, unwilling to feel Hannibal’s wrath atop everything else, and Hannibal’s brows draw as Will shudders when he presses his hand to the small of the boy’s back.

He sits shaking as Hannibal serves them both, and pours each a glass of wine that Will touches no more than anything else at the table. It is a cruelty, the chill that has set over the room, and Hannibal tops his glass off higher than he should before taking his seat across from the boy who once teased and coiled and purred for him and now only sits in stark silence, eyes demured.

“Isn’t it better to know, than to not?” Hannibal asks him, and still Will says nothing, biting his lip, hands braced against the chair beneath him. And so Hannibal eats, with what little pleasure remains in the meal that he had saved so particularly for Will to enjoy, set aside and waited until their strife reached a standstill and he could share this with him.

To equalize them. To bring them together as Mason himself once did.

The meat tastes bitter and Hannibal wonders if it’s only his own feelings given flavor.

Will does not eat, stoic in sitting still but he touches nothing, not the bread or the wine before him, not the stew that smells - to his utter displeasure - absolutely divine. He can see Hannibal eating in his peripheral vision, he can feel the man's eyes on him, but he cannot bring himself to lift his hand, to take the spoon and take a bite.

The silence grows heavy, and Will has never felt this sick from pressure alone, from expectation, from the news and the utterly unapologetic way Hannibal handles violence.

"Will." His eyes up, and nothing more. Hannibal has finished his meal, Will has yet to start his own. It will be cool, now, no longer warming like a stew should be. That thought makes him sick too. "You will eat."

Will just keeps his teeth harsh against his lip before the ire of the man across from him burns against his skin and he finally brings a hand up to take up the spoon and set it into the stew. He avoids the lumps of meat as he seeks to just take a piece of potato, just enough to show he has eaten, to perhaps be allowed reprieve that way.

"Properly, Will. Now." He feels his throat constrict, shifts the spoon enough to take a piece of meat as well before bringing it up, regarding it. He can do it just once, he supposes, he tries not to think of how often he relished in Hannibal's amazing meals, in his pleasure watching Will eat. He closes his eyes and takes the spoon between his lips, tasting the delicious weight of the stew, the spices and salt, the thick piece of potato he sinks his teeth into, the soft meat he brushes with his tongue -

Will coughs, hand up to press to his lips, body almost heaving with the need to remove this from him, to forget the taste.

With shocking speed, Hannibal is up from his seat and around the small table they shared once in pleasure, and now in a stand-off. Will's shoulders hunch and he no sooner gags in earnest than Hannibal's hand is over his mouth, smothering, just beneath his nose and forcing the boy's breath even shorter.

"Swallow," he snarls, the rejection an insult, a slap in the face to the man whose expression blackens when Will shakes his head. "You will swallow either way, and better without a mouthful of bile to accompany it."

Will moans, a desperate sound around the small mouthful of stew, settling in his mouth, and Hannibal clutches harder across the boy's lips.

"I will hold your nose as if you were a child if you force me and I will be hard pressed to let you breathe again if it comes to that," Hannibal promises.

Will is shaking, one hand against the table and one around the chair so hard his knuckles are white. His heart hammers, he can feel himself grow dizzy with the lack of air, and he knows that Hannibal will keep his promise if he angers him any more than he already has. He chews, what, he no longer cares, how, he no longer knows, but he manages to enough to swallow, to keep it down.

He pulls air in as much as he can, where Hannibal still allows him to breathe, blinks open his eyes, smeared with tears and sticky with them, to meet Hannibal's so the man knows. He watches the snarl take against Hannibal's upper lip, a dangerous expression Will has always been happy to see directed at another. He sobs again, softly, just once.

"Ungrateful," Hannibal mutters, withdrawing his hand and watching, expectant. Will shakes his head again, shoulders folded forward, and runs the back of his hand along his eyes.

"Please," he begs. "Please, I did it -"

"And you will finish it," Hannibal responds flatly, exhausted of the fighting, the pleas, the ingratitude and accusation. He steps back enough, to allow Will the room to consider his options, expectant that he will choose well. Returning to his seat, wineglass in hand, Hannibal sits heavily and watches the bowl, rather than the boy.

"I saved this," Hannibal tells him. "For you. For us both to enjoy when I had hoped you were capable - intelligent - enough to understand. To savor the taste of your victory, your freedom." He takes a sip of the wine, chasing the taste of it with his tongue, and says softly, "I cannot think of many times in which I have been so entirely disappointed."

Will presses the heels of his hands against his eyes and cries, soft things that shake him entirely, and that draw no mercy from the man before him. It takes him a long time to compose himself, but Will does. Slowly, carefully, eyes closed and face drawn in genuine pain, Will finishes his dinner.

It becomes a matter of principle, setting his spoon in the bowl scraped clean of all the stew, and meeting Hannibal's eyes with his own, still bright and wet. Hannibal's jaw works, and Will swallows, ducking his head before pushing the chair back to stand.

"I'd like to take a bath," he says softly, trying to avoid Hannibal's eyes until he can't anymore, until the silence between them stops him breathing and Will has to look. "It tasted…" he sighs, "beautiful. But it's wrong. I don't know how to reconcile that."

Another breath, deep, as he draws his fingers over and over the tabletop. "Please let me go," he says again.

Hannibal's eyes tighten in the corners, expression withdrawn from anger or insult, from fondness or affection. He wants to reach for Will, to bring the boy against him and stroke his hair, tell him that it is not an easy thing to understand but that he will. Given time, given trust, it will become no different than any other meal, perhaps even enjoyed for the rarity of it, the thrill of acquiring it and Hannibal's exuberant pleasure in preparing it.

His throat works in a rough swallow and he does not force himself upon the boy, certain that it would be taken as such.

"Go," Hannibal tells him, and he finishes his wine as Will goes slowly upstairs.

Hannibal,

Will presses a cigarette to his lips and holds his hands close to be able to contain the little flame on the match to light it. It's cold, but no longer winter, no longer as frightening and desolate as when he had launched himself from the den, covered in blood and bile, and run into the belly of London. He exhales quickly, a huff of air before he bothers to take the cigarette from his lips and let out a slow plume of smoke instead.

I hope this finds you well. In all our anger I don't think either of us ever really meant the other… permanent harm. I hope, too, that you remember me. Not only with this letter, but the times we did share. Early mornings with your fingers against my skin. It always tickled, and I always let you do it, trying to keep a straight face as you relentlessly touched me till I had to admit I was awake.

I had never seen anyone as beautiful as you were that morning in the back room, taking breakfast with Mason. And then you looked back, you touched me and after that you never stopped. You were the only thing I thought of when I was in pain, that you would be there soon to take that away. To give me water, and untie me, to feed me and hold me close when I was cold. And you did, for a long time, you did. And I loved you for it.

It's quiet, in the alley, but not empty. An old woman sits against the mouth of it with her blanket over her shoulders, holding out a metal cup for coins. Will had given her some, enough that she would be fed, and more still so she would not speak of him when Hannibal inevitably asked. She sits, now, singing her strange words that make no sense, and sways, trying to earn more money.

He's hungry, can feel it turning in his stomach and pulling him, and the urge to get a hot bun, to breathe in the delicious smell of freshly baked bread, is almost enough to pull him from here, but he stays, he waits, tapping the toe of his boot against the hard and filthy road. He pulls Hannibal's pocketwatch to check the time, tapping the glass gently with a fingernail before returning it to his waistcoat pocket.

But you do not see me as a person, I don't think either of you were ever capable. To him, I was a dog, and that was easy. Easier. To you, though, I was a beautiful doll. A boy to parade and dress, to bend and make moan. And I did. You know, I never moaned for him? Only you. I loved it, and you would get this look and I would have to do it again.

You'll have noticed, by now, the things missing. Not much, I promise most of it is just to set your jaw tensing at the mess. The money's gone. A fair bit of it, when I actually went looking. It'll get me out of London, and you? You can earn it back. Always the mind of a businessman. I'm sorry about the clothes, those, I admit, were done vindictively. But it's not hard to survive with one set of your own, believe me, you grow used to it. After a while, it feels like coming home, wearing them again, adjusted and softened to you. Also, be very careful how much flour you use when preparing kidney pie - I know it's a favourite. Believe me or don't, really, but I cannot for the life of me remember how much cocaine I put in the flour and how much in your wine.

You can look for me, if you like, I'd welcome the company. The police are on their way, I put in an anonymous letter this morning regarding the den and the stash you once had in your

home, and it might be a bit of a stretch to both avoid them and find me. I can wait, I've done nothing but, since you made me prepare that stew. I should thank you, for that, actually. It was a delicious meal, and eye-opening. Thank you, Hannibal, for setting me free that evening, no one else could have, and I will always be grateful.

For the first time in his recent memory - months, maybe years - Hannibal laughs. A low, building sound unfamiliar to the walls of this house - now no longer his own - and heard by no one. He returned to find the binding to his bed severed, a knife that had long ago gone missing from the kitchen tossed onto his bed. The same one, he imagines, used to gut his clothing and rip it to tatters, though - he notes with a dark humor - still left upon their hangers.

Books missing, the bedroom ransacked, drawers taken from their cabinets and upturned, all of his money - in a hidden compartment behind one of the drawers - gone. The letter was left on the kitchen table, at the space where the boy once sat.

His boy, Hannibal thinks, but wonders if it was ever true. And if it were, then equally in truth, Hannibal would have expected nothing less.

The harsh bang against the door comes as he finishes the letter, a shout to open for the Metropolitan Police. By the time they knock again, Hannibal is gone with no more than the clothes on his back, the money in his wallet, and Will's letter slipped into his breast pocket, pressed against his heart.

I'll be there, when they take you outside, or when you run on your own. I will see you before I go. But my train leaves late this evening, and after that I don't think I will see you for a very long time. Goodbye, Hannibal. Thank you for the dinners and the early mornings, and teaching me of evil. I hope this finds you well, and you are not overly taxed by the raid. Perhaps you'll find yourself with more stashed for next winter, if all goes well.

I love you.

Will Graham.

Chapter End Notes

...so to speak ;)

You know how we are, and we know how you are, and we wonder, truly, how long it will take before we possibly continue this saga elsewhere.

An ENORMOUS thank you to everyone who commented and left kudos, who spread the word and bookmarked, it means the world. Considering this is a remix of two stories we have written we are astounded it drew the audience it did, and we are so happy and so proud of it :D

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!